MARS™

14

by Fuyumi Soryo

MARS 14

マース

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MARS

Rei Kashino
A high school student who races motorcycles. He has proposed to Kira and after reconciling with his father, Rei moves back home.

Masao Kinshima
He used to adore Rei and tried to kill Kira.

LEGEND OF MARS

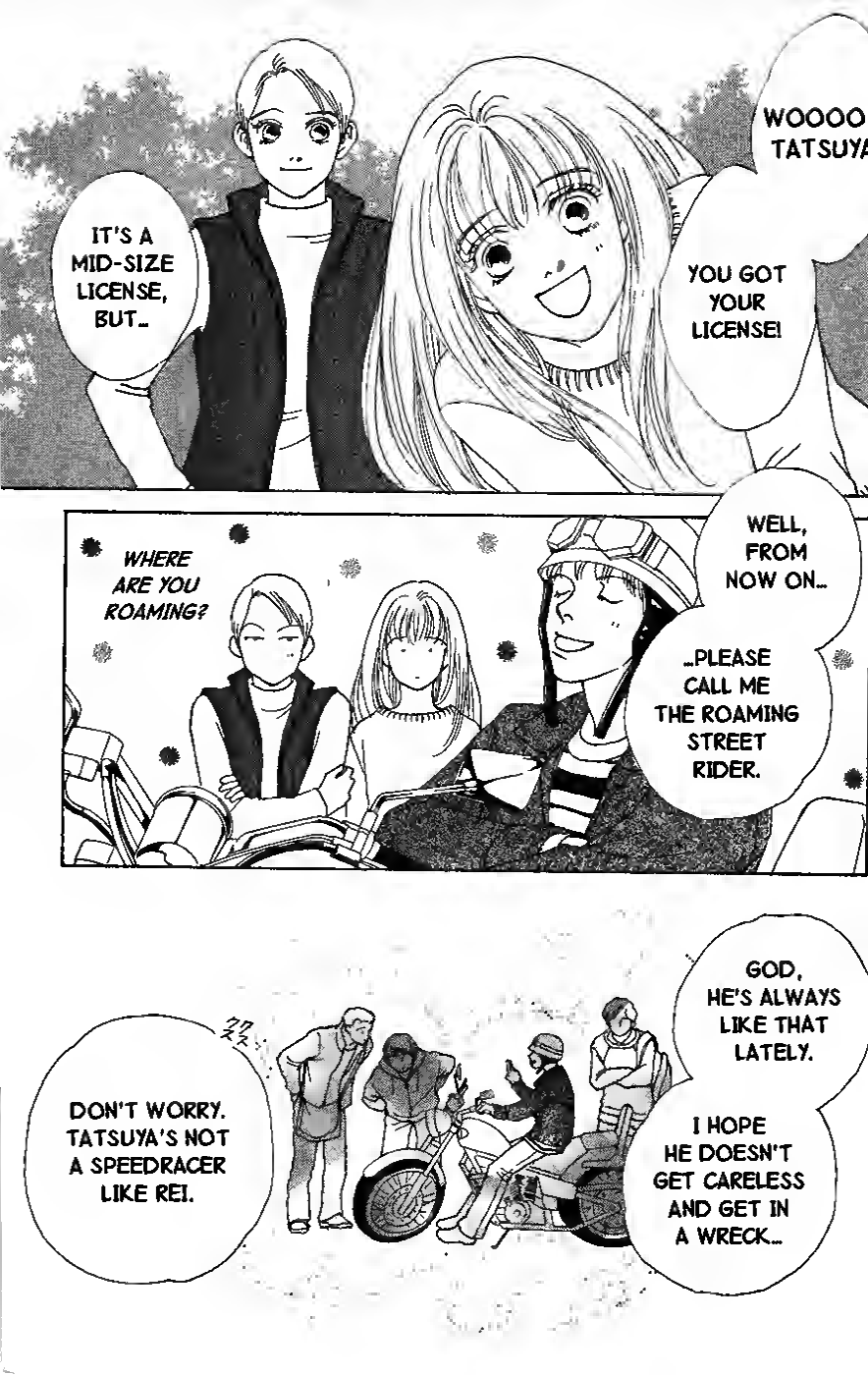
レジェンド オブ マーズ

The story until now

Kira is spellbound by Rei when he kisses a statue of Mars in the art studio. They begin dating and after living together, they decide to get married. But Rei ends up assaulting Kira's stepfather when he comes to get her, and Rei is faced with potential murder charges. Rei's father steps in and takes care of the situation, under the condition that Rei goes back to school and quits riding motorcycles. Rei's father reveals to Kira about Rei's mother's suicide and how Rei's real father died. Meanwhile, Rei pays a visit to his doctor at the psychiatric center and uncovers the truth behind his mother's past. In spite of all the turmoil, Kira and Rei enjoy a brief moment of peace while Kira returns to school and Rei tries desperately to fit into the corporate world so he can take over his father's business, but—is Rei really prepared for what lies ahead?

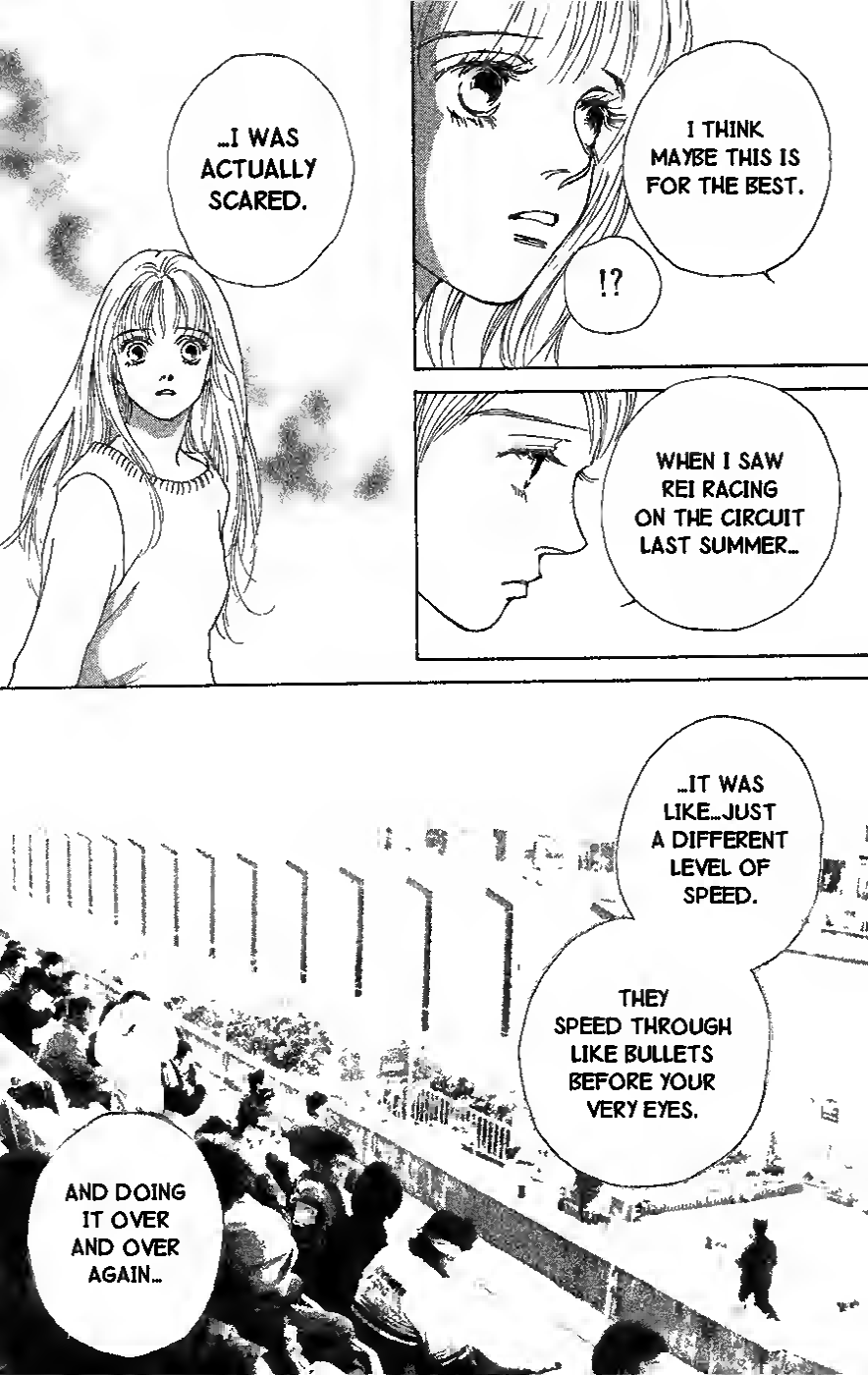
Kira Aso
She was raped by her stepfather during junior high. Right after she and Rei decide to get married, her stepfather comes to get her.

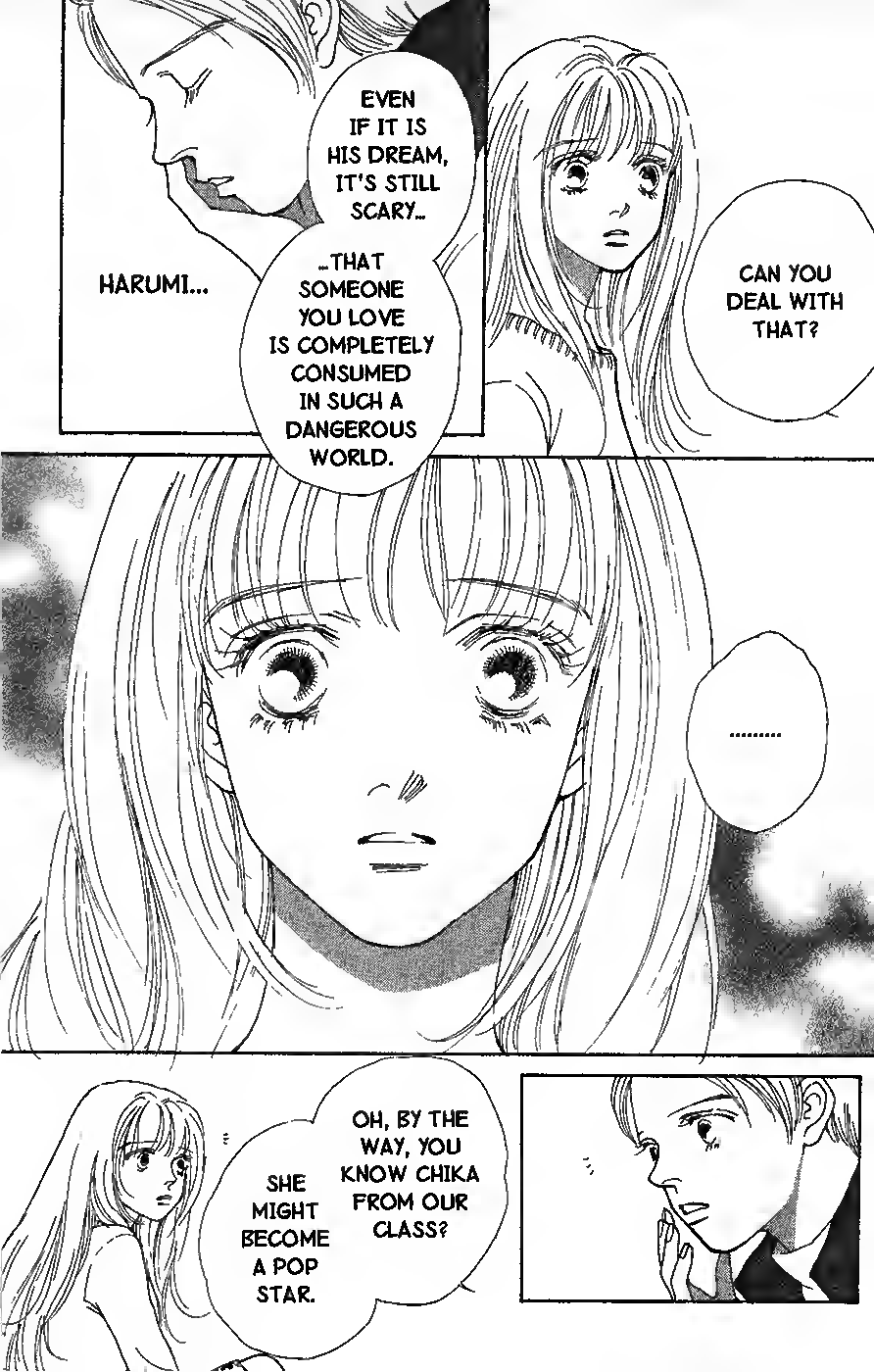
Rei's father
He is the president of a company called the OAK group. He is not Rei's real father.

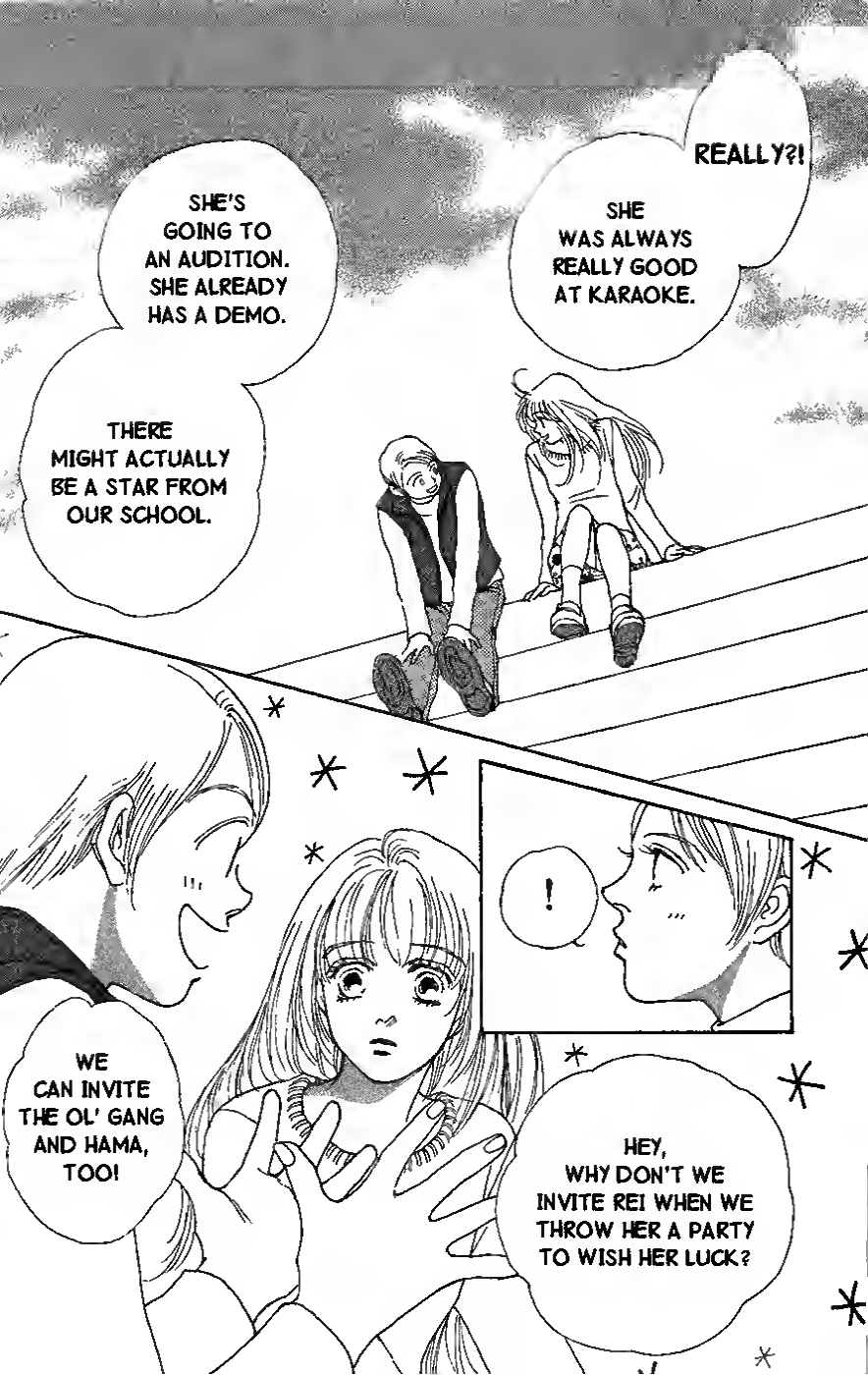

WOOOO
TATSUYA
YOU GOT YOUR LICENSE!
IT'S A MID-SIZE LICENSE, BUT...
WELL, FROM NOW ON...
...PLEASE CALL ME THE ROAMING STREET RIDER.
WHERE ARE YOU ROAMING?
GOD, HE'S ALWAYS LIKE THAT LATELY.
I HOPE HE DOESN'T GET CARELESS AND GET IN A WRECK...
DON'T WORRY. TATSUYA'S NOT A SPEEDRACER LIKE REI.

HEY, HARUMI.
IT'S ABOUT REI...
!
WHAT?!
REI IS SO STRESSED OUT, HE'S GONE CRAZY?!
NO...
IT'S NOT THAT BIG OF A DEAL...
BUT I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT IT WAS A MISTAKE FOR REI TO QUIT RIDING MOTORCYCLES.

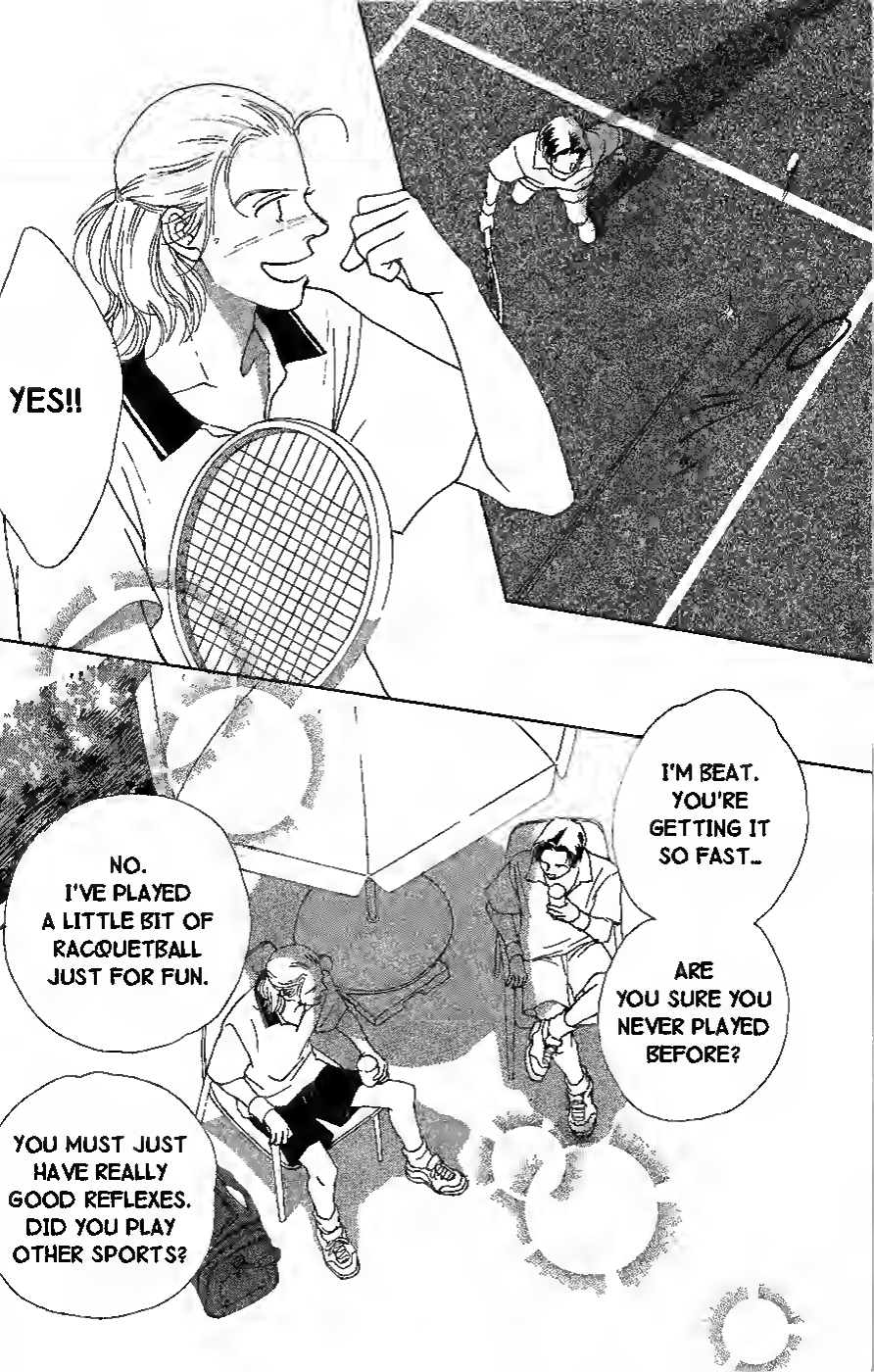
BUT DIDN'T REI DECIDE THAT FOR HIMSELF?
BUT THAT WAS ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.
I THINK REI'S REALLY SACRIFICED A LOT AND IS BENDING OVER BACKWARDS TO MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY.
I GET TO PURSUE MY ART...
...BUT REI HAS TO GIVE UP HIS DREAM OF BEING A RACER.
THAT'S NOT RIGHT.
I FEEL BAD THAT HE HAS TO GIVE UP HIS DREAM, BUT...


...I WAS ACTUALLY SCARED.
I THINK MAYBE THIS IS FOR THE BEST.
!?
WHEN I SAW REI RACING ON THE CIRCUIT LAST SUMMER...
...IT WAS LIKE...JUST A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF SPEED.
THEY SPEED THROUGH LIKE BULLETS BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES.
AND DOING IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN...


HARUMI...
EVEN IF IT IS HIS DREAM, IT'S STILL SCARY...
...THAT SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS COMPLETELY CONSUMED IN SUCH A DANGEROUS WORLD.
CAN YOU DEAL WITH THAT?
.....
OH, BY THE WAY, YOU KNOW CHIKA FROM OUR CLASS?
SHE MIGHT BECOME A POP STAR.

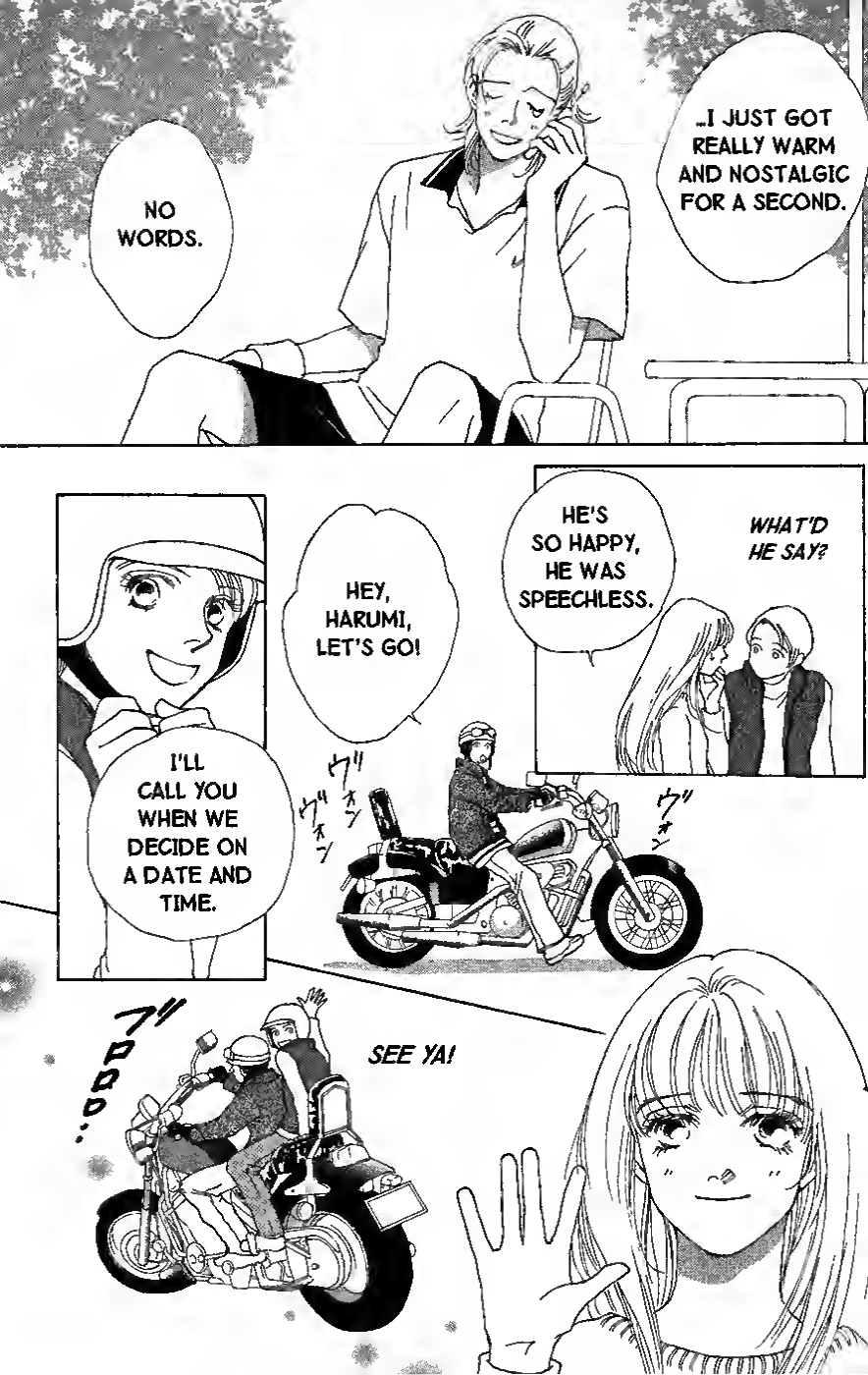

REALLY?!
SHE WAS ALWAYS REALLY GOOD AT KARAOKE.
SHE'S GOING TO AN AUDITION. SHE ALREADY HAS A DEMO.
THERE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE A STAR FROM OUR SCHOOL.
!
HEY, WHY DON'T WE INVITE REI WHEN WE THROW HER A PARTY TO WISH HER LUCK?
WE CAN INVITE THE OL' GANG AND HAMA, TOO!

YONEX
PRACTICE


YES!!
I'M BEAT. YOU'RE GETTING IT SO FAST..
ARE YOU SURE YOU NEVER PLAYED BEFORE?
NO. I'VE PLAYED A LITTLE BIT OF RACQUETBALL JUST FOR FUN.
YOU MUST JUST HAVE REALLY GOOD REFLEXES. DID YOU PLAY OTHER SPORTS?

...BAS-KETBALL.
NO...
WHAT?!
MOTOR-CYCLES...
OH, BASKET-BALL.
BUT TENNIS IS FUN TOO, RIGHT?
WHY DON'T YOU STOP BY MY COUNTRY HOUSE IN KARUIZAWA?
A BUNCH OF MY TENNIS BUDDIES ARE TALKING ABOUT GETTING TOGETHER.
KARUIZA-WA...
...HOW NICE.

HEY! REI?!
IT'S ME, KIRA..
I'M AT SCHOOL RIGHT NOW,
BUT HARUMI WAS TALKING ABOUT GETTING TOGETHER WITH A BUNCH OF PEOPLE FROM WEST HIGH.
WE CAN INVITE HAMA AND THE OLD GANG AND HAVE A BIG PARTY!
.....
?
HEY, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
REI?!
I CAN HEAR YOU..

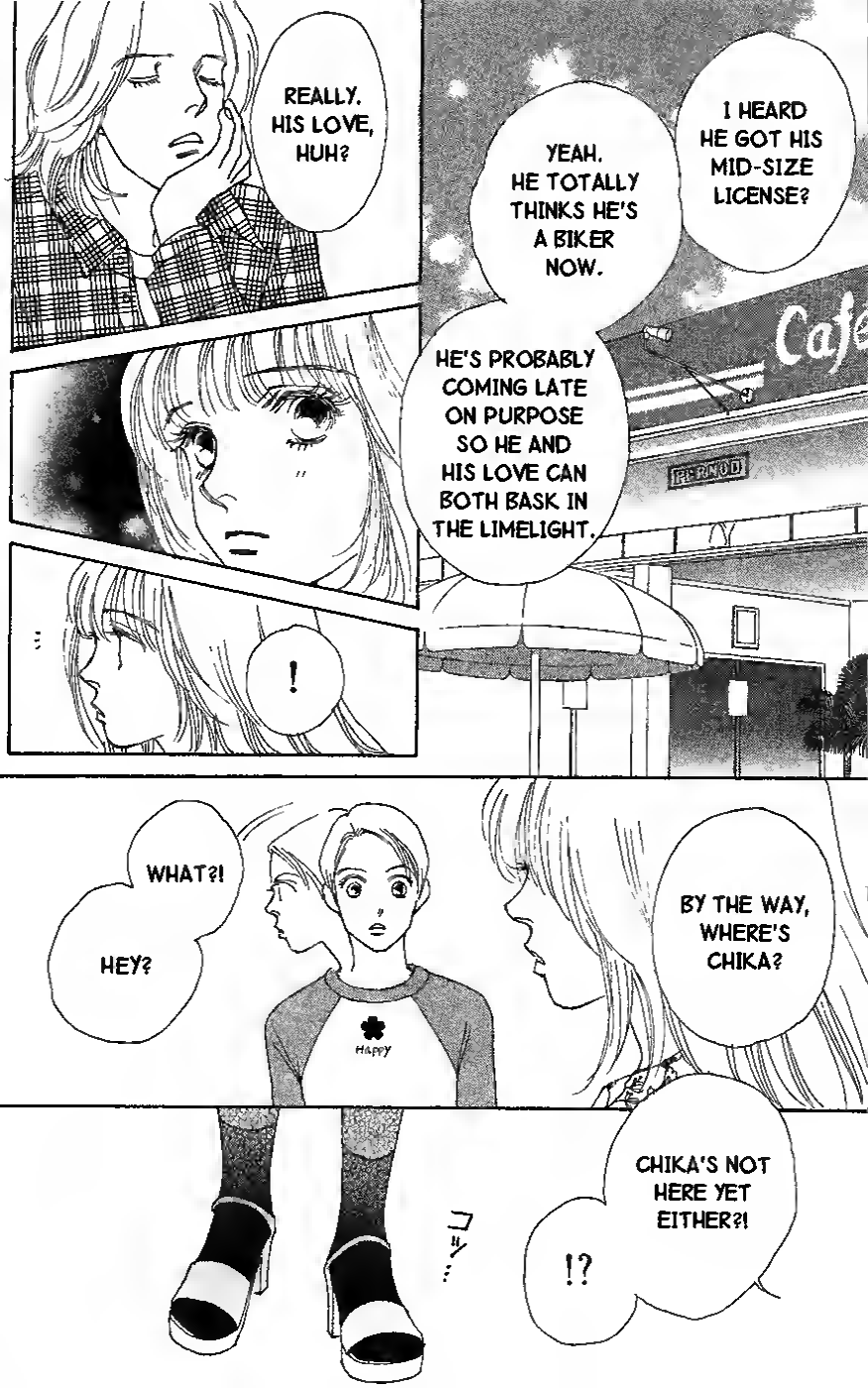

NO WORDS.
..I JUST GOT REALLY WARM AND NOSTALGIC FOR A SECOND.
I'LL CALL YOU WHEN WE DECIDE ON A DATE AND TIME.
HEY, HARUMI, LET'S GO!
HE'S SO HAPPY, HE WAS SPEECHLESS.
WHAT'D HE SAY?
ウォン ウォン
ウォン
ブロロロ...
SEE YA!

THE WAY REI'S
REAL FATHER DIED...

I DON'T KNOW, IT WAS LIKE A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF SPEED, YOU KNOW?
THEY'RE LIKE BULLETS...
I WAS ACTUALLY SCARED.

OH MY GOD!!
WE HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN SO LONG, REI!!!
REI, I THINK YOU'VE AGED SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.
IDIOT. DON'T BE CRUEL.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IT'S ONLY BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE REI QUIT SCHOOL.

HEY REI, YOU BASTARD... GIVE ME BACK THE 50 BUCKS I LENT YOU!
HEY!
IT'S TRUE.
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU'RE THE SON OF A CORPORATE MOGUL?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
I MISSED MY CHANCE TO MARRY A RICH MAN.
YOU SHOULD'VE TOLD US SOONER.
I'LL KILL YOU!
CAN I WRITE YOU A CHECK?
SORRY, SORRY!
A RICHIE RICH SHOULDN'T BE BORROWING MON FROM A POOR GU
OH!
WHERE'S TATSUYA?
HE SHOULD BE HERE PRETTY SOON.
HEY?

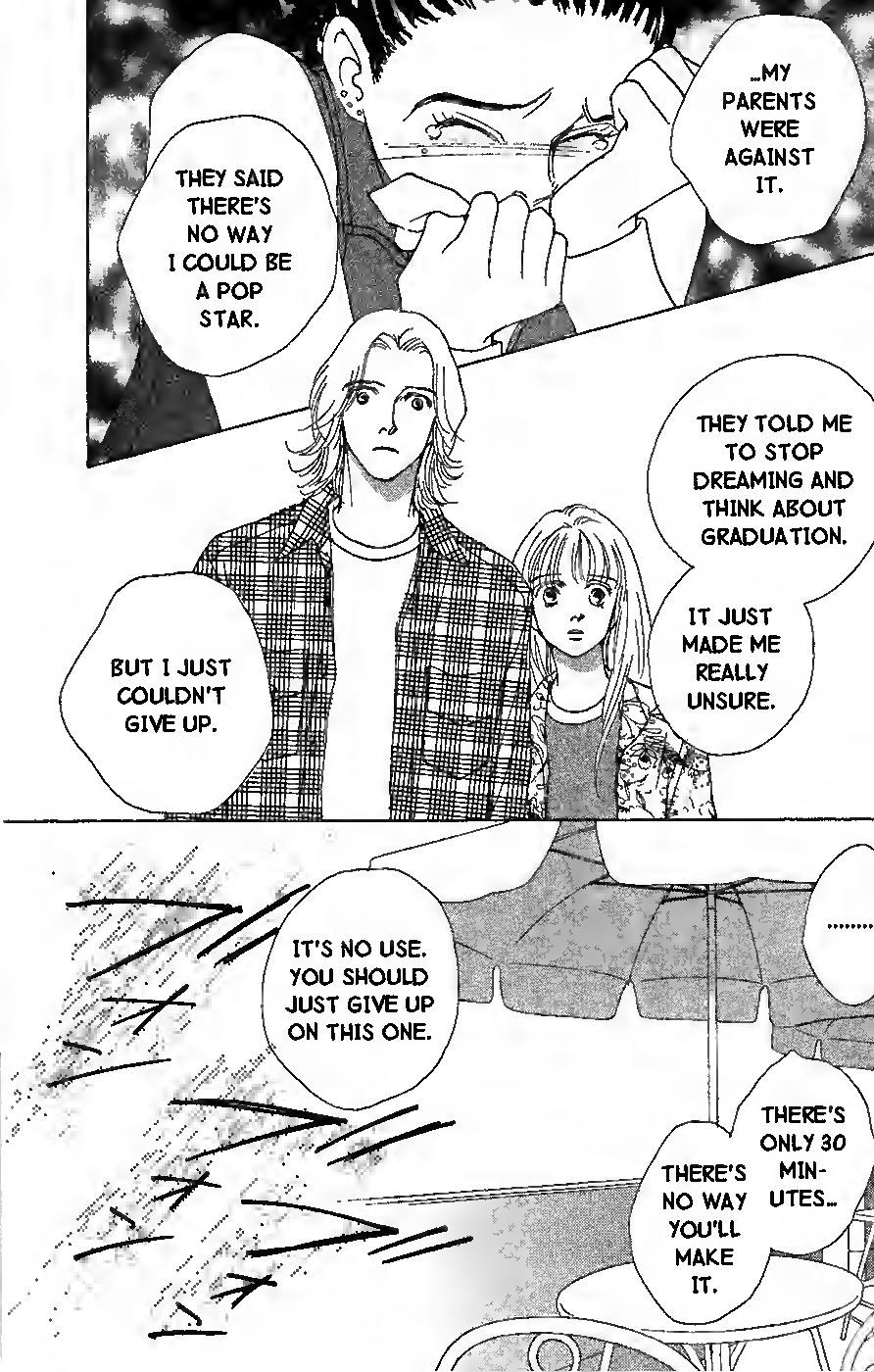

REALLY. HIS LOVE, HUH?
I HEARD HE GOT HIS MID-SIZE LICENSE?
YEAH. HE TOTALLY THINKS HE'S A BIKER NOW.
HE'S PROBABLY COMING LATE ON PURPOSE SO HE AND HIS LOVE CAN BOTH BASK IN THE LIMELIGHT.
!
BY THE WAY, WHERE'S CHIKA?
WHAT?!
HEY?
HAPPY
CHIKA'S NOT HERE YET EITHER?!
!?

CHIKA...
URR!
WAAAAAAH...
CHIKA?

WHEN?
WHERE?!
THAT'S...
WHAAAT?!
YOU LOST THE TAPE FOR YOUR AUDI-TION?
I THOUGHT I'D DROP IT OFF AT THE RECEPTION DESK FIRST,
BUT I BUMPED INTO THIS MAN ON MY WAY OVER HERE.
HEY!!!
HE HAD A SIMILAR ENVELOPE TO MINE AND...

THIS IS A RESUME.
TAKEO KABACHI.
DAMN, A SENIOR AT TOKYO UNIVERSITY!
WHAT?! HE'S A SENIOR AND ALREADY LOOKING FOR A JOB?
MAYBE IT'S AN INFORMATION SESSION OR SOMETHING.
HEY!
THIS IS AN INVITATION FROM MY DAD'S COMPANY.
WHAT?!

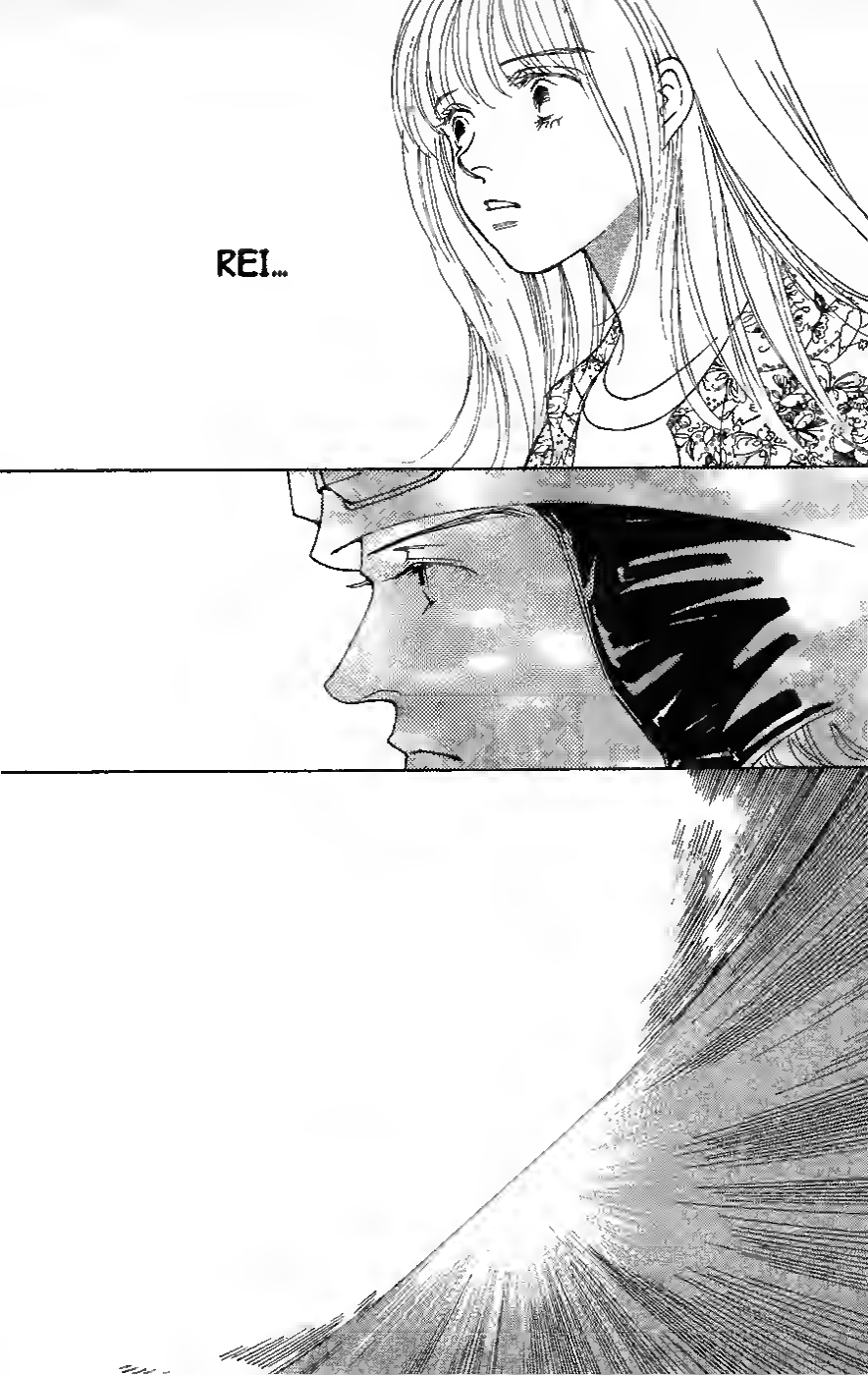
WHY DON'T YOU CALL HIM RIGHT NOW?
WHAT? SO THIS GUY'S AT REI'S DAD'S PLACE RIGHT NOW?
HIS CELL NUMBER'S ON HERE.
THE DEADLINE FOR THE AUDITION IS AT 3:00 TODAY.
IT'S NO USE. EVEN IF I GET THE TAPE BACK, I WON'T MAKE IT IN TIME.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
BECAUSE...
WHY DID YOU WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE?
YOUR TAPE WAS DONE A LONG TIME AGO, WASN'T IT?!

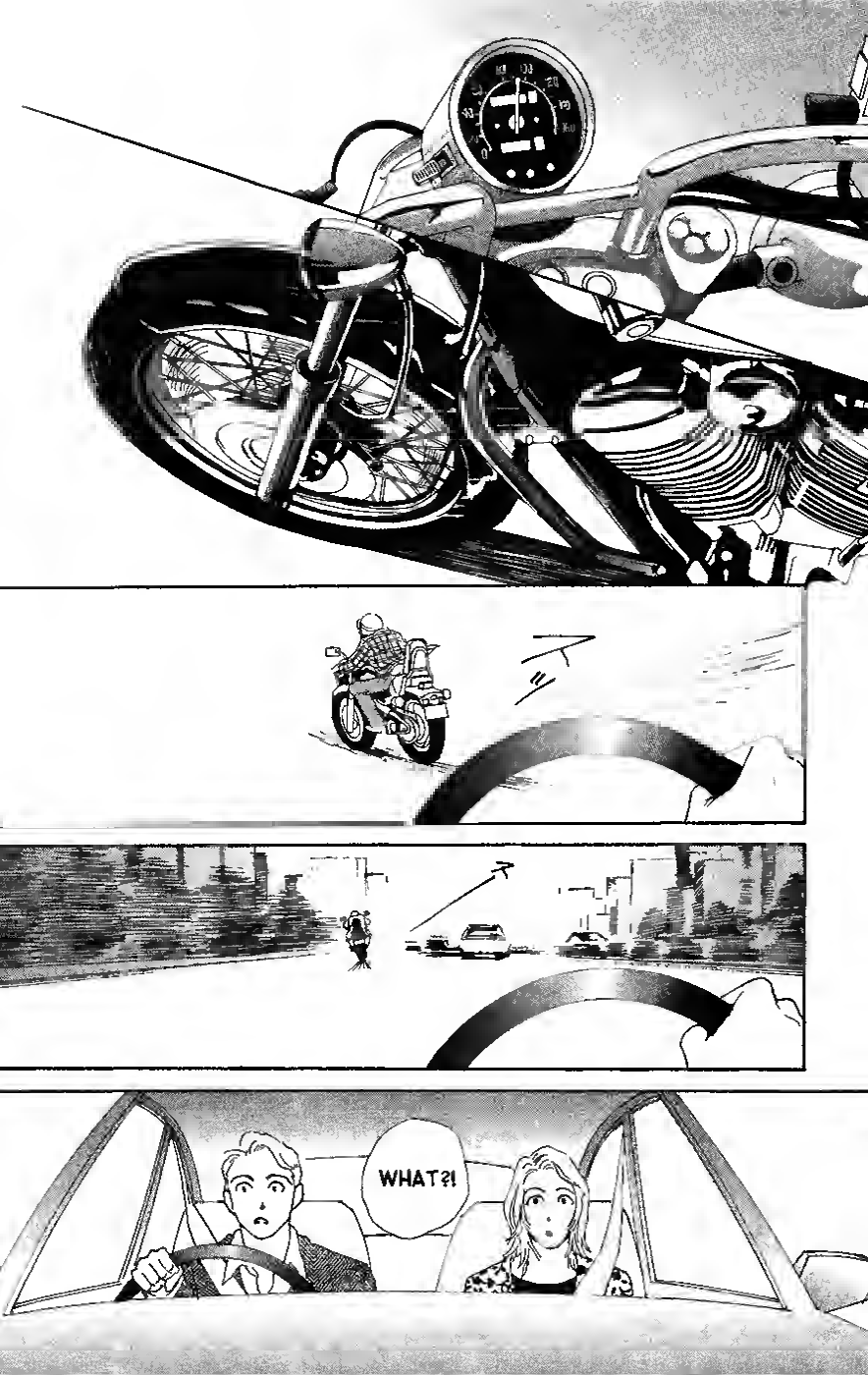

...MY PARENTS WERE AGAINST IT.
THEY SAID THERE'S NO WAY I COULD BE A POP STAR.
THEY TOLD ME TO STOP DREAMING AND THINK ABOUT GRADUATION.
IT JUST MADE ME REALLY UNSURE.
BUT I JUST COULDN'T GIVE UP.
.....
IT'S NO USE. YOU SHOULD JUST GIVE UP ON THIS ONE.
THERE'S ONLY 30 MIN-UTES...
THERE'S NO WAY YOU'LL MAKE IT.

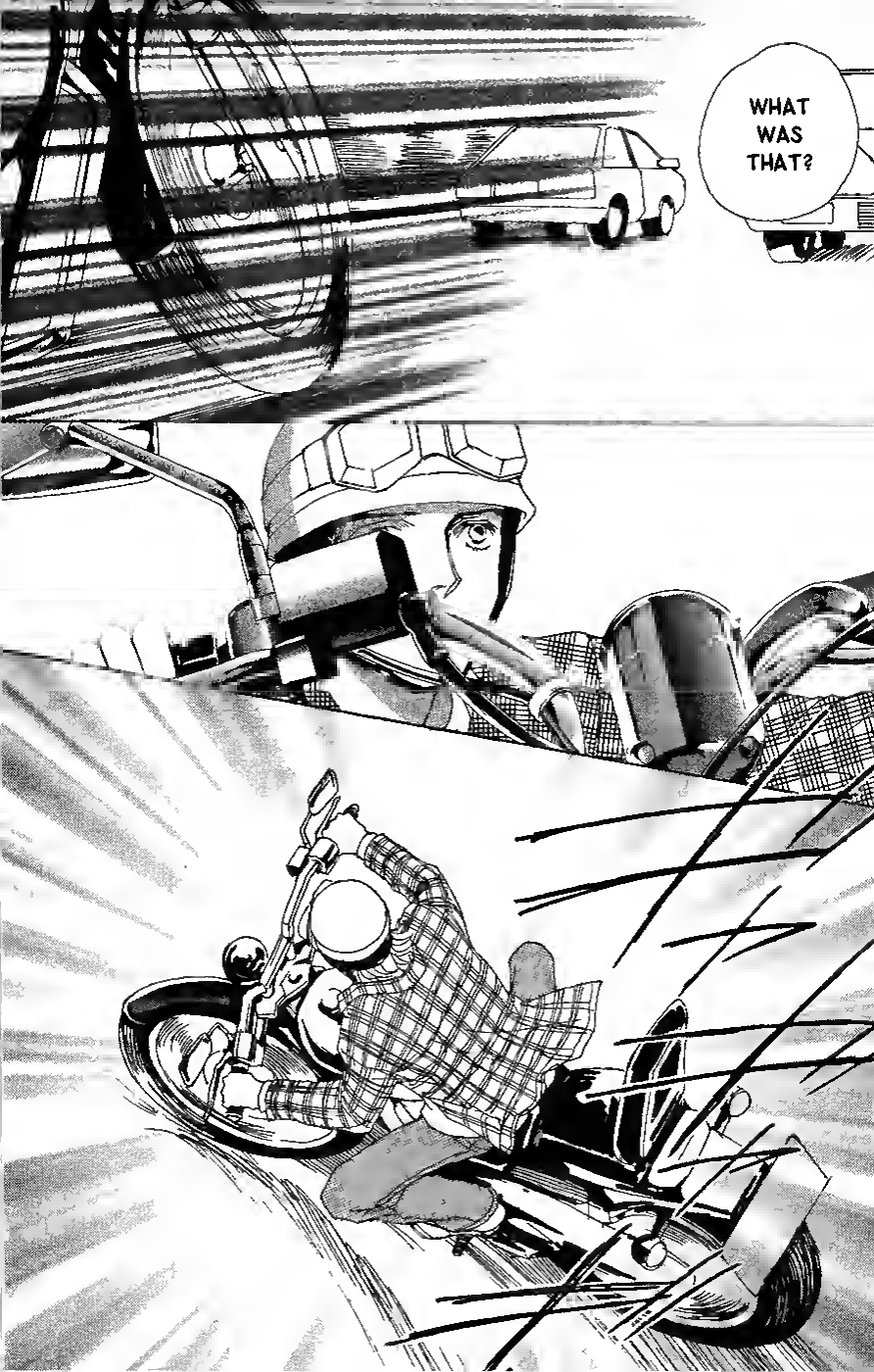
HEEEEY!
THE ROAMING RIDER HAS ARRIVED.
HEH HEH!
HUH?
NO REACTION?
YOU'LL MAKE IT.

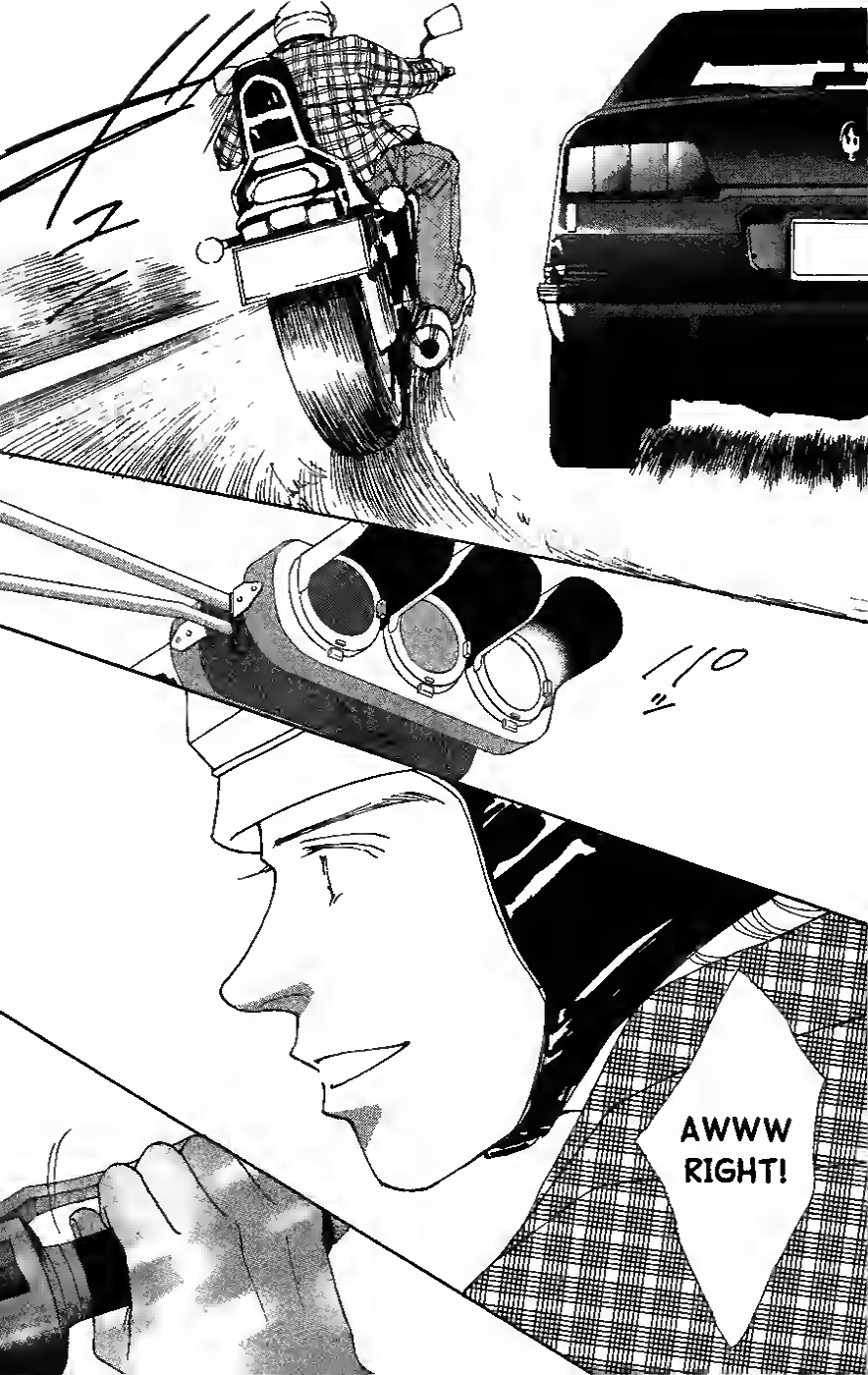
TATSUYA, LEND ME YOUR BIKE.
?
DON'T WORRY, CHIKA.
I'LL HELP YOU FULFILL YOUR DREAMS.

HUH?!
WHAT, WHAT?!
THAT'S MY MOTORCYCLE! HEY!
HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
GOOOOO, REI!!!!!!!
IT'S OKAY! REI WILL BE THERE ON TIME!
25 MORE MINUTES..
MY BIKE..
STEP ON IT!
Landscape


REI...


WHAT?!


WHAT WAS THAT?


!!
AWWW RIGHT!

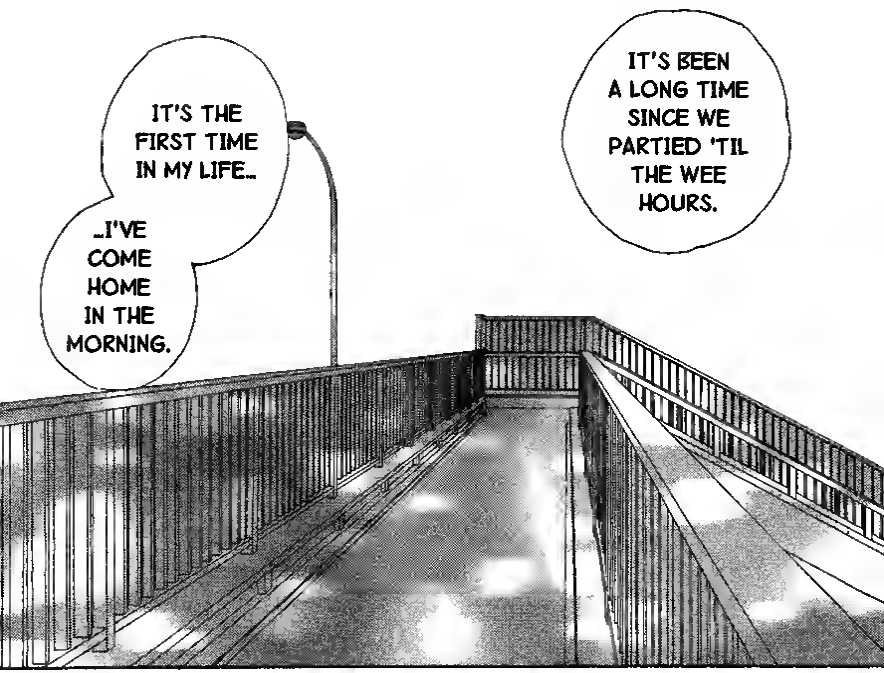
HEY YOU!
WAIT!
IT'S ME!
OH, THE PRESI-DENT'S...
!
I... I APOLO-GIZE!
BUT I'M REALLY TAKEO KABACHI.
I WON THE LOTTERY AT THE SEMINAR YOUR COMPANY HAD, REALLY!

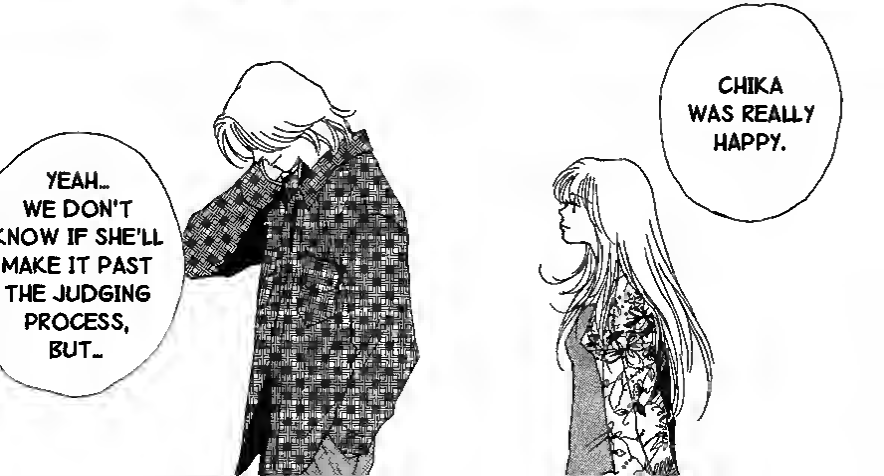
KABA!
70
!?
HELLO, REI?

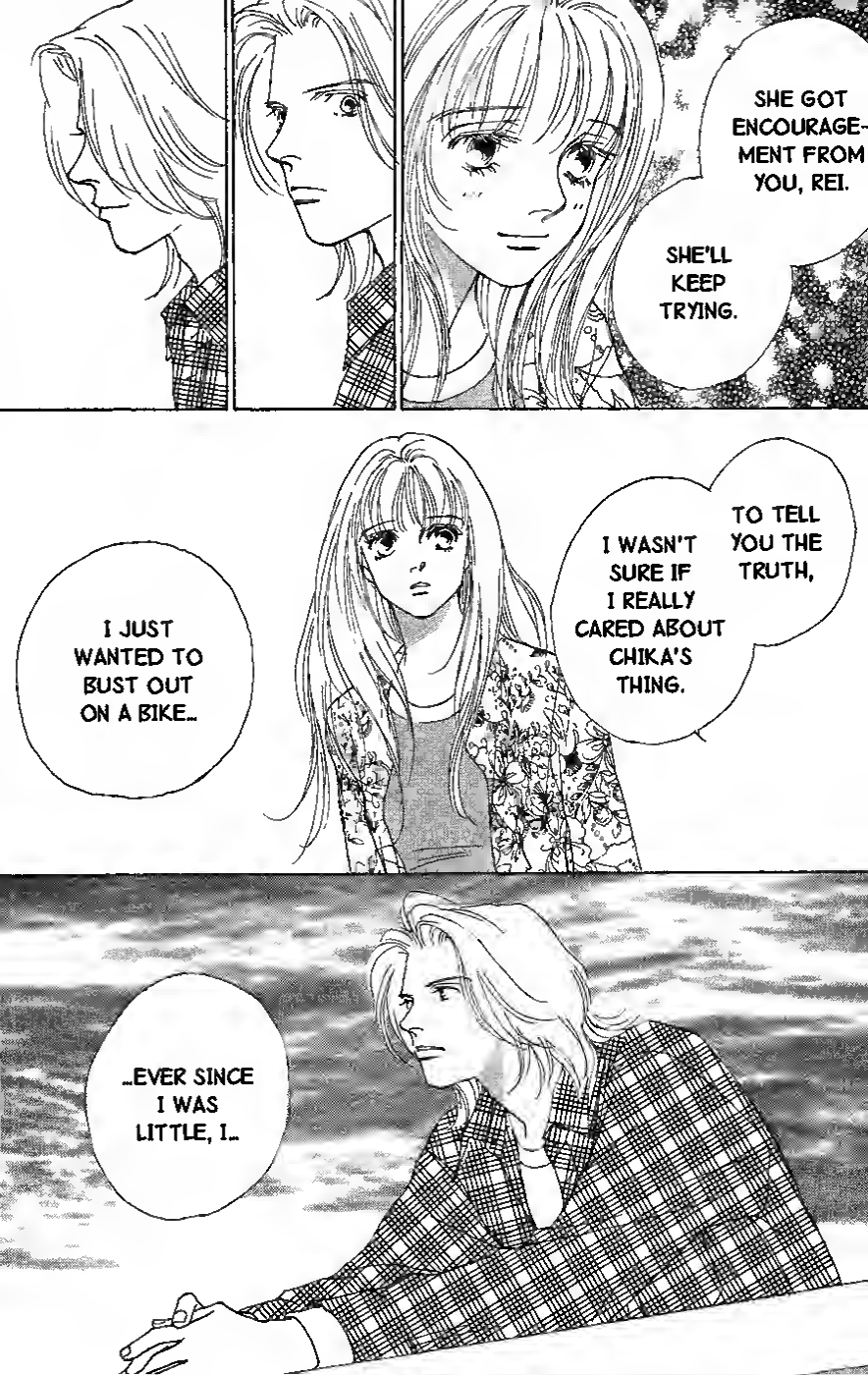
HE GOT THE TAPE?!
ALL RIGHT!
GO, REI!
DAMN, IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN 10 MINUTES.
I'LL DROP OFF THE TAPE AT THE OFFICE.
YOU THINK YOU'LL MAKE IT?
EASY! TELL CHIKA!

HE SAID HE'S GOING FULL THROTTLE FOR CHIKA'S DREAM.
REI...
HE HUNG UP.
ASK HIM IF THE BIKE'S OKAY?!

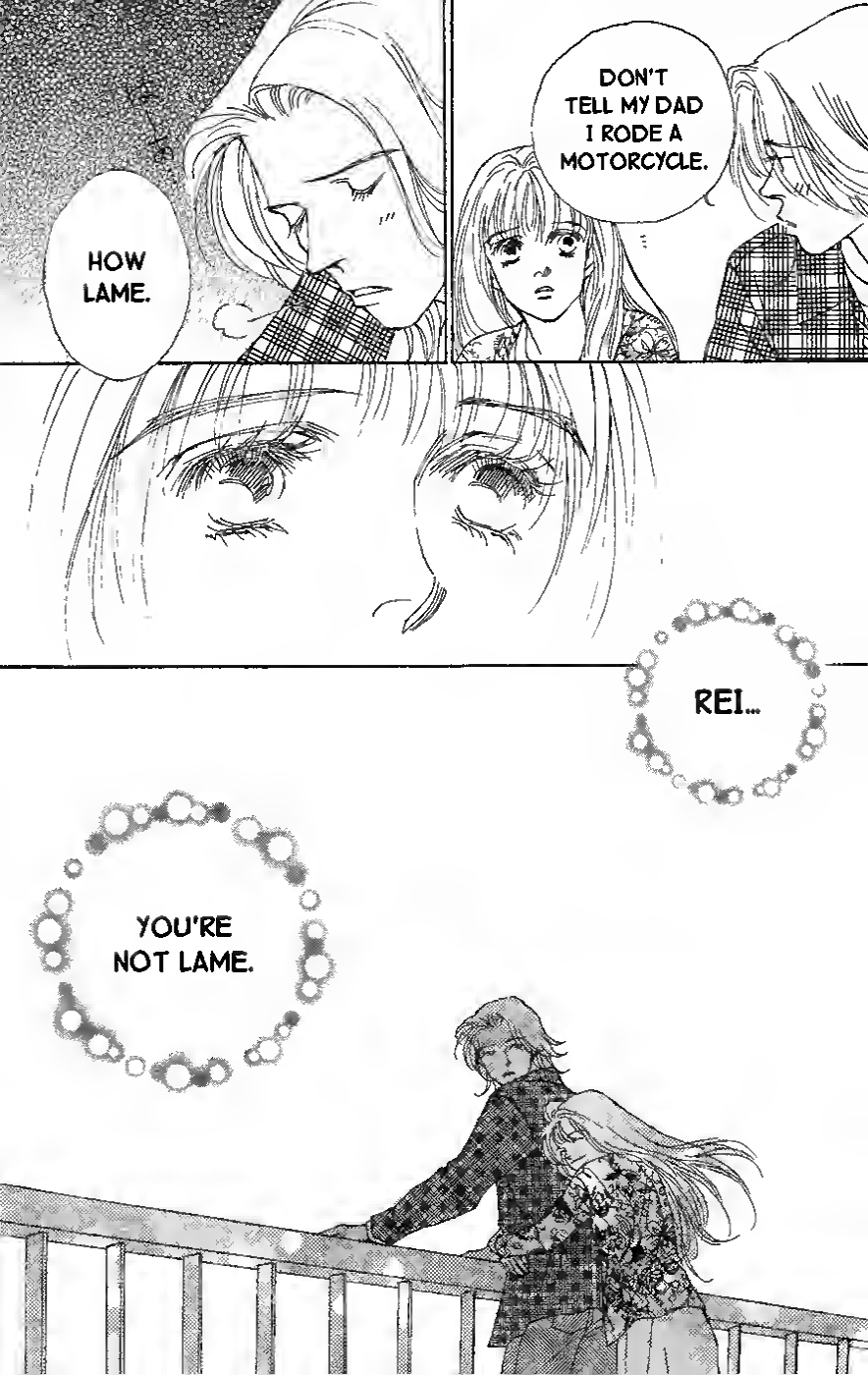
...REI REALLY IS AMAZING!





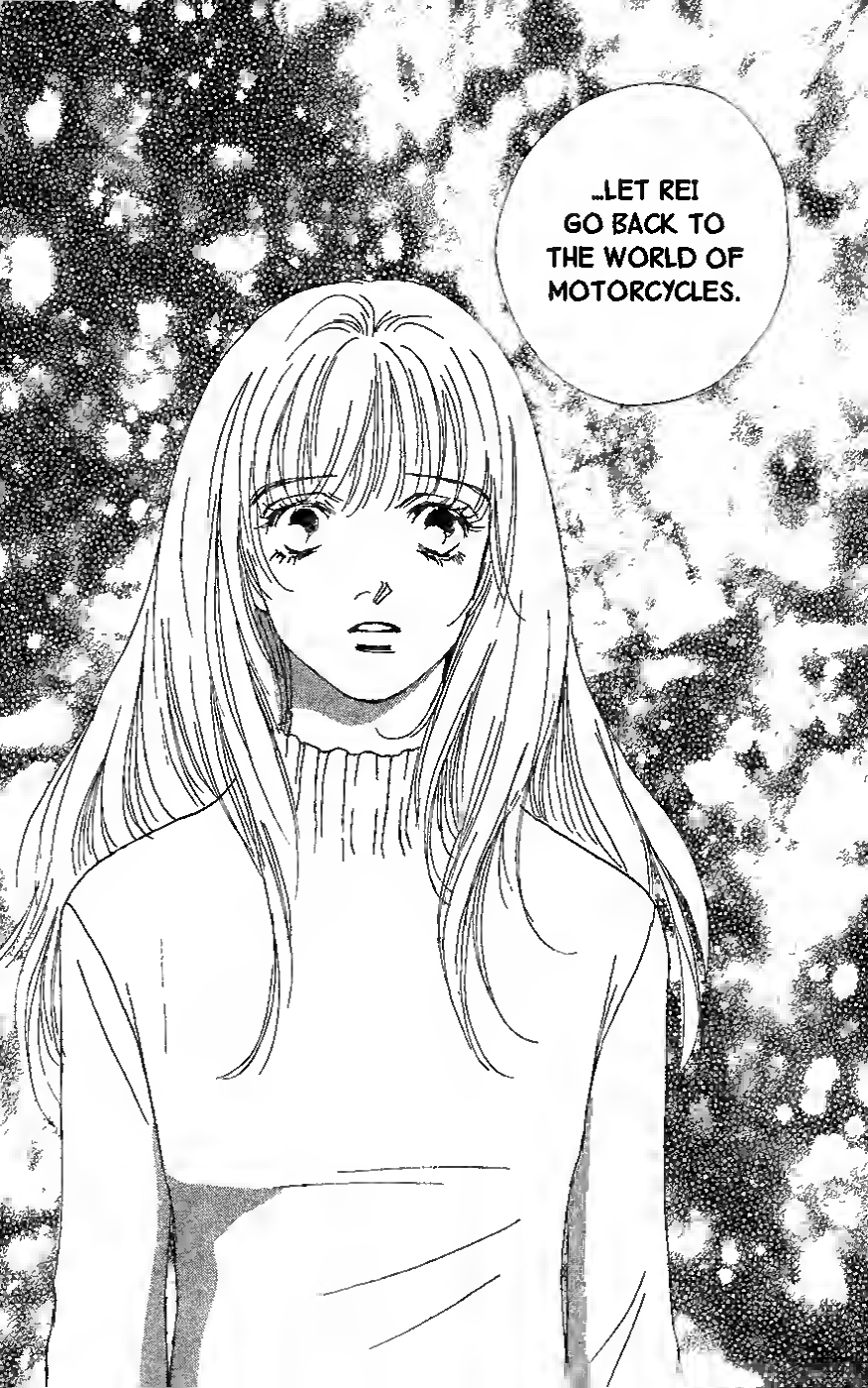

SHE GOT ENCOURAGE-MENT FROM YOU, REI.
SHE'LL KEEP TRYING.
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH,
I WASN'T SURE IF I REALLY CARED ABOUT CHIKA'S THING.
I JUST WANTED TO BUST OUT ON A BIKE...
...EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE, I...

..WONDERED WHAT LIES AHEAD.
WHEN I LOOK AT A ROAD LIKE THIS..
..I WANTED TO RIDE ON IT FOREVER JUST TO SEE.
I WONDER WHY I THINK LIKE THAT?
IT'S STUPID, RIGHT?


DON'T TELL MY DAD I RODE A MOTORCYCLE.
HOW LAME.
REI...
YOU'RE NOT LAME.

カチャ…

SORRY TO MAKE YOU WAIT.
WHAT HAPPENED? WHY DID YOU COME ALL THE WAY TO MY OFFICE?
OH...
...ACTUALLY, I HAVE A REQUEST...
?
PLEASE...


...LET REI GO BACK TO THE WORLD OF MOTORCYCLES.

DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE ASKING?
DO YOU REALIZE HOW DANGEROUS IT WOULD BE TO LET REI RETURN TO THE RACING WORLD?

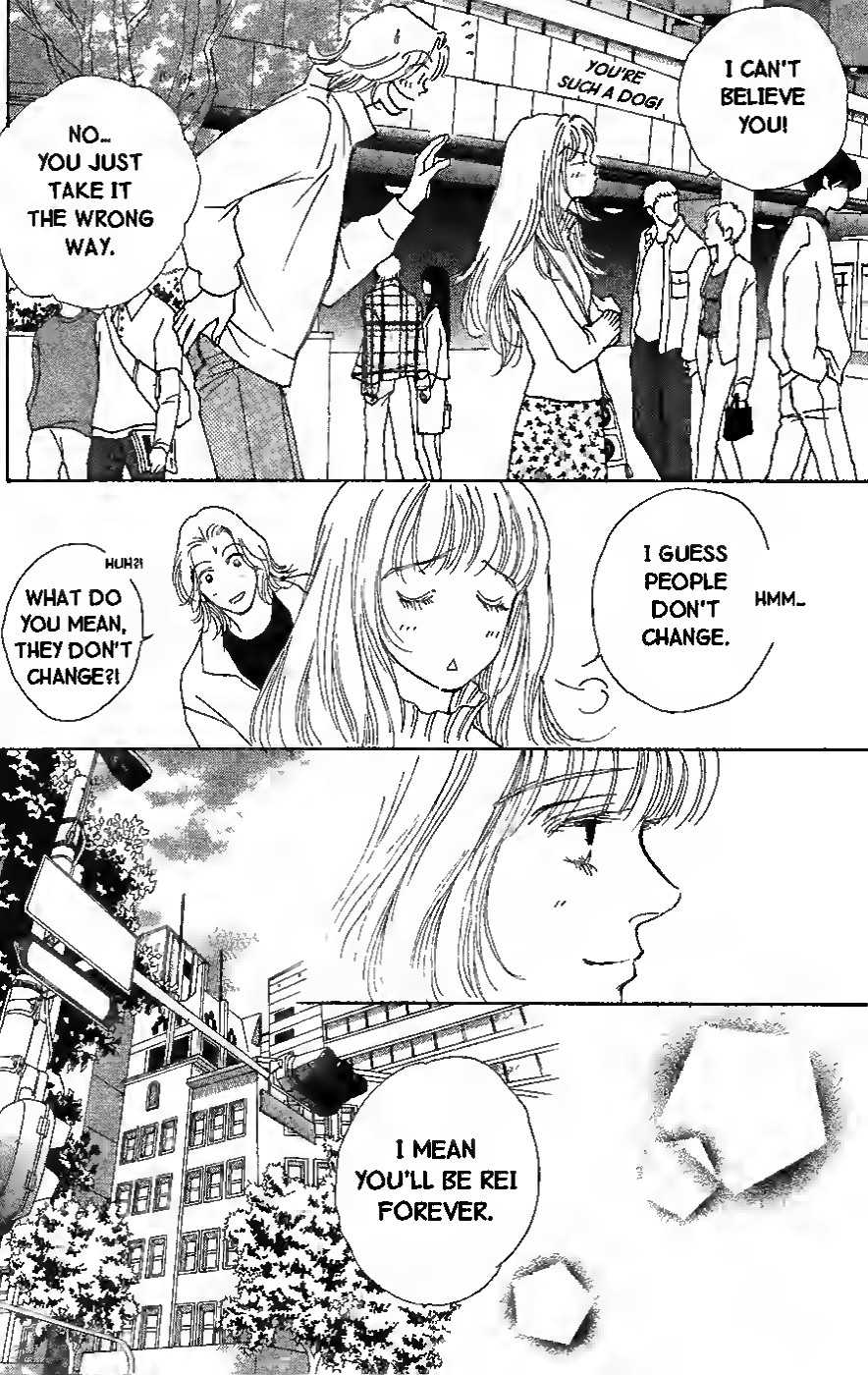
YOU KNOW HOW HIS FATHER DIED!
I THOUGHT ABOUT THAT MANY TIMES.
I REALIZED THAT WORLD REI'S IN ISN'T SAFE AT ALL...
Marlboro
TO BE HONEST, I GET SCARED SOMETIMES TOO.
EVERY TIME REI LEAVES THE HOUSE, I WONDER IF IT'S THE LAST TIME I'M GOING TO SEE HIM, BUT...

..THAT'S THE WAY REI CHOOSES TO LIVE.
IT'S NOT BECAUSE SOMEONE FORCED HIM AND IT'S NOT FOR ANYONE ELSE.
THERE'S SOMETHING MAGICAL ABOUT REI WHEN HE'S RIDING.
I REALIZED THAT'S THE REI I FELL IN LOVE WITH.

PLEASE...
...PLEASE ALLOW REI TO BE HIS TRUE SELF.

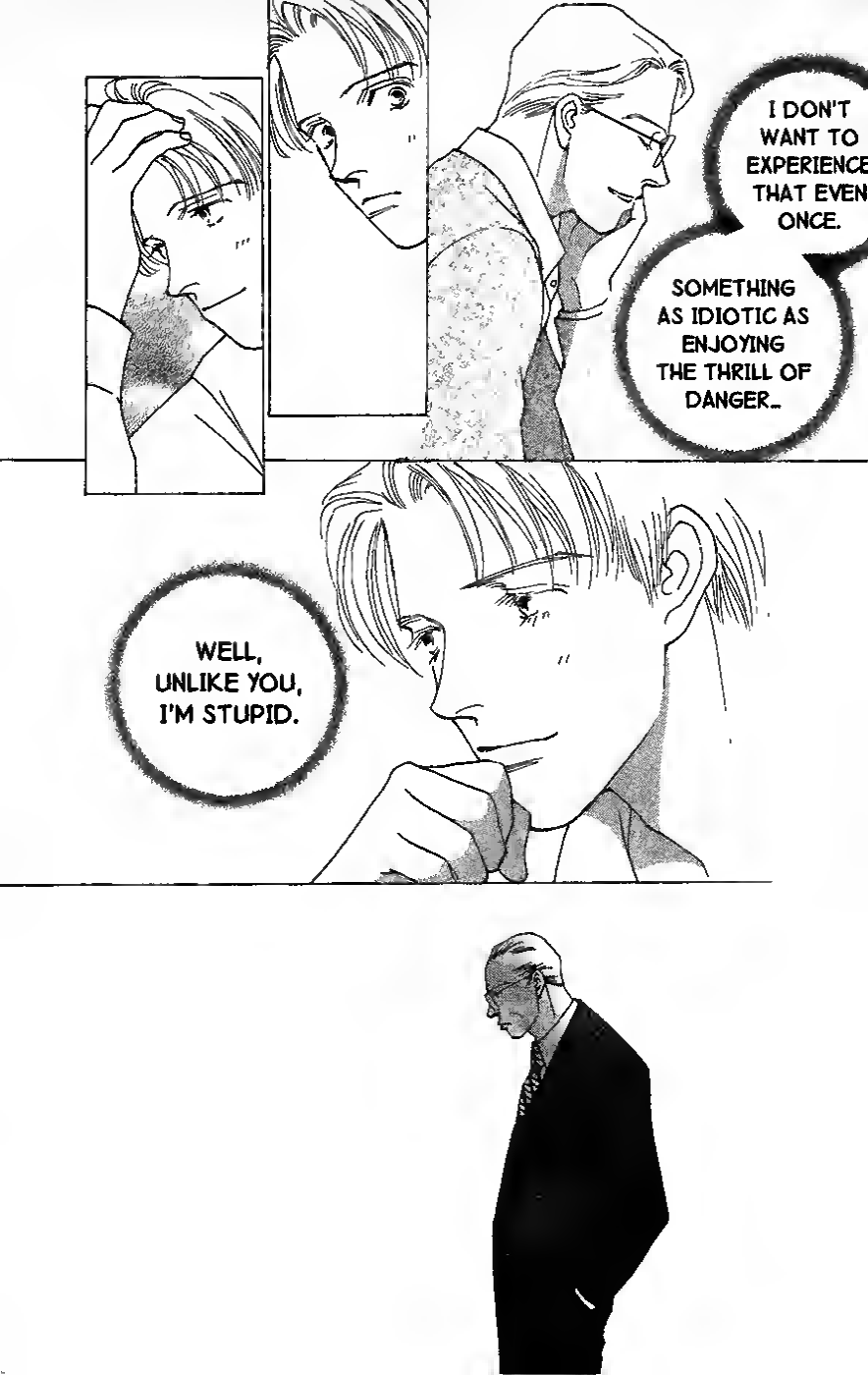
LET REI BE FREE AGAIN.
LUMINE
REI!

I'M SORRY..
WHO ARE YOU LOOKING AT??!!
HEEEEY!
!?


I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU!
YOU'RE SUCH A DOG!
NO... YOU JUST TAKE IT THE WRONG WAY.
HMM...
I GUESS PEOPLE DON'T CHANGE.
HUH?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THEY DON'T CHANGE?!
I MEAN YOU'LL BE REI FOREVER.

CAR RACING...

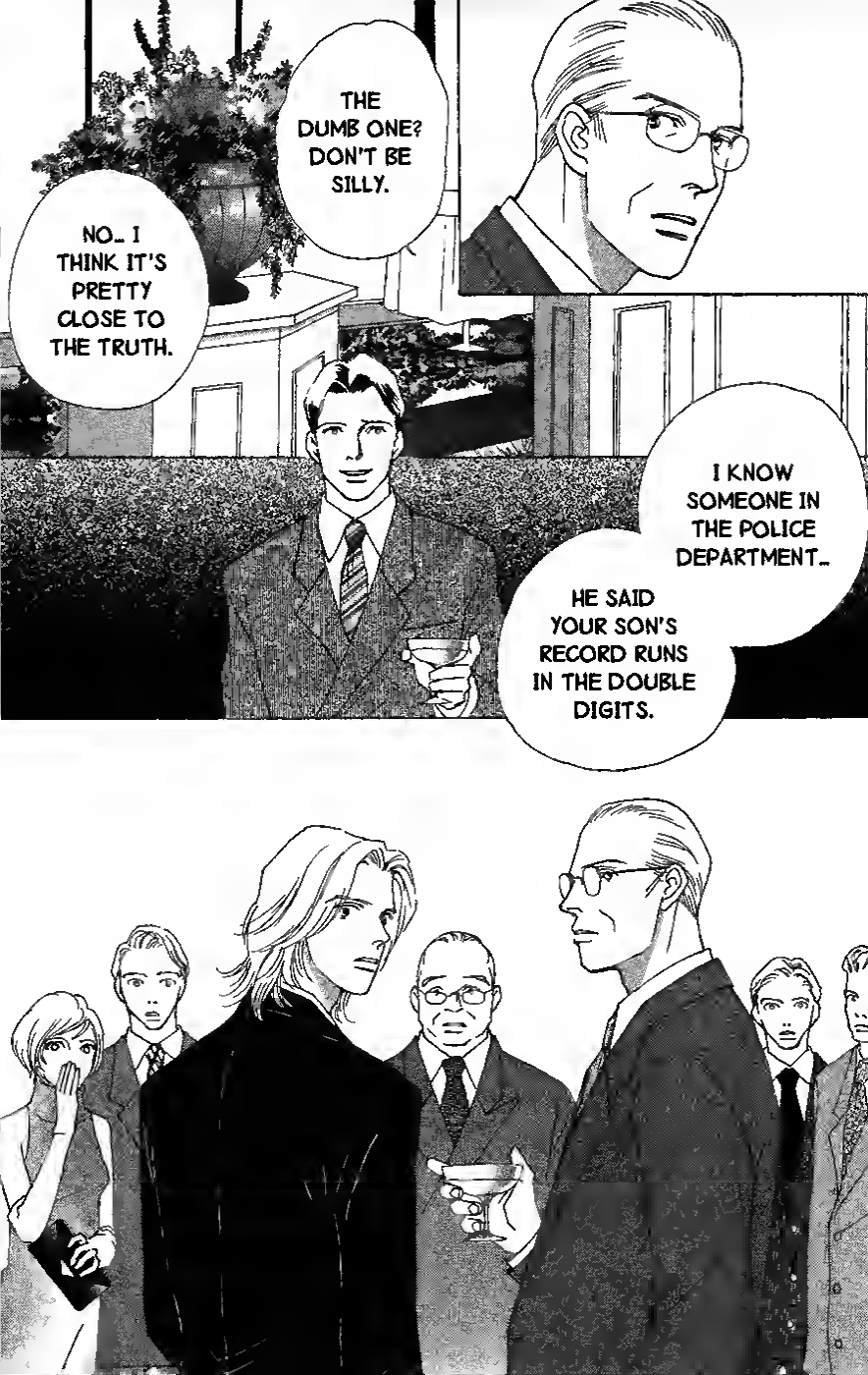
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
WHAT'S SO FUN ABOUT..
..RACING CARS?
20th Century
THE SPEED,
THE THRILL.
ONLY PEOPLE WHO'VE RACED ON A TRACK CAN UNDERSTAND.
ONCE YOU'VE EXPERIENCED IT, YOU CAN'T STOP.


I DON'T WANT TO EXPERIENCE THAT EVEN ONCE.
SOMETHING AS IDIOTIC AS ENJOYING THE THRILL OF DANGER..
WELL, UNLIKE YOU, I'M STUPID.

IS BEING SECOND GENERATION A BIG THING IN POLITICS AND BUSINESS?
YOU REALLY FEEL IT AT THESE PARTIES.
JAPAN'S THE ONLY PLACE THAT STILL DOES THAT.
IT'S THE MOST INFURIATING CUSTOM.

ONCE YOU GET TO THAT POINT, YOU'RE A THOROUGHBRED AMONG ALL THOROUGH-BREDS.
HE'S NOT SECOND GENERATION, HE'S THIRD GENERATION.
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL..
THAT'S THE SON OF THE OAK GROUP PRESI-DENT.
I'VE HEARD YOU WERE QUITE A GOOD STUDENT.
EVEN THE ALMIGHTY OAK GROUP CAN GATHER DARK CLOUDS.
BUT I'VE HEARD THAT MAYBE HE'S A HACK.
OH..
..THAT WASN'T ME, THAT WAS MY BROTHER SEI.
MY GRANDSON WAS COMPLAINING THAT YOU NEVER MISSED A SINGLE TRIAL EXAM.

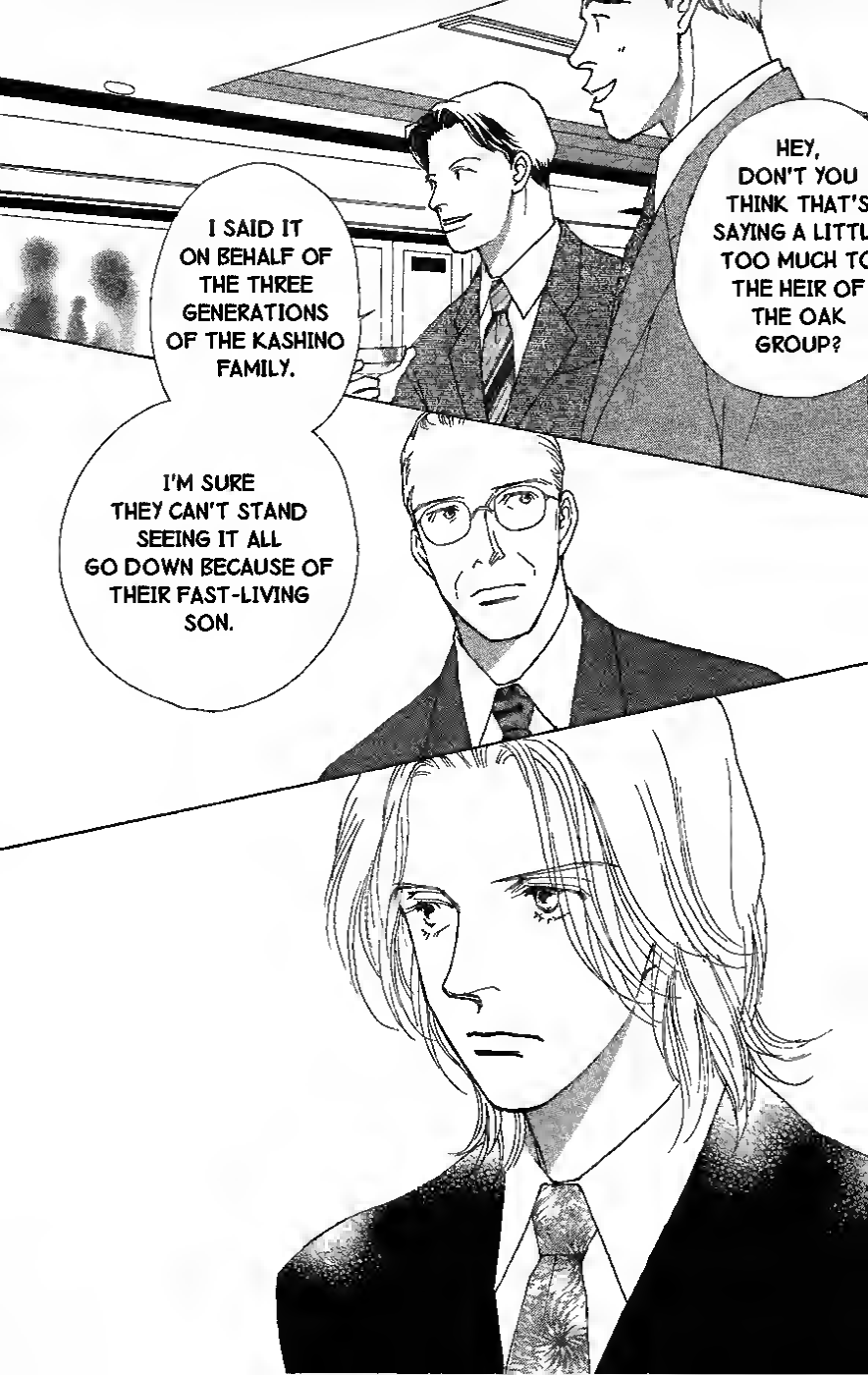
BROTH-
ER...?
...THAT'S RIGHT,
YOU'RE A TWIN,
AREN'T YOU?
THAT'S
RIGHT,
HE WAS
THE SMART
ONE.
I'M THE
DUMB ONE,
HIS OLDER
BROTHER.


THE DUMB ONE? DON'T BE SILLY.
NO... I THINK IT'S PRETTY CLOSE TO THE TRUTH.
I KNOW SOMEONE IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT...
HE SAID YOUR SON'S RECORD RUNS IN THE DOUBLE DIGITS.

OH...
BUT THAT'S NOT ME.
.....
IF YOU INCLUDE ALL THE TIMES I GOT AWAY, IT WOULD'VE BEEN MORE THAN 100 TIMES!
TH-THAT'S QUITE A HEROIC CHILD.

I PLAN TO WORK HARD AS MY FATHER'S SUCCESSOR.
BUT I'M TRYING TO BE MORE SERIOUS NOW.
DO YOU HAVE A VISION FOR THE FUTURE?
DO YOU HAVE ANY GOALS?
IF YOU COULD RUN A BUSINESS ON PLANS, NO ONE WOULD SUFFER.
ARE YOU SERIOUSLY THINKING ABOUT ENTERING THE BANKING WORLD?
? ? ?
HOW DO YOU PLAN ON..
..LEADING THE I.T. REVOLUTION FOR THE OAK GROUP?

I'M SURPRISED YOU DON'T KNOW MUCH OF THAT.
WHAT WERE YOU DOING UNTIL NOW?
OH, UMMM..
UM.. THAT IS..
I HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT ANY OF THAT.
YOU WERE TOO BUSY PLAYING TAG WITH THE COPS TO THINK ABOUT IT?


HEY, DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S SAYING A LITTL TOO MUCH TO THE HEIR OF THE OAK GROUP?
I SAID IT ON BEHALF OF THE THREE GENERATIONS OF THE KASHINO FAMILY.
I'M SURE THEY CAN'T STAND SEEING IT ALL GO DOWN BECAUSE OF THEIR FAST-LIVING SON.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR CONCERN.
I'VE BEEN LIVING MY LIFE WITHOUT MUCH THOUGHT UNTIL NOW.
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE TOUGH BECAUSE I'M SO UNREFINED..
..BUT..

..NOW I THINK IT'S BETTER TO BE UNREFINED
..THAN BEING A MASTER AT POKING FUN AT OTHER PEOPLE'S FAULTS.

JUST KIDDING.
MY HEAD FILLS UP WITH LOTS OF STUFF SINCE IT'S SO EMPTY.
Y'KNOW, LIKE HOW DRY SPONGES ABSORB WATER REALLY WELL?
.....
NICE TALKIN' TO YOU. PLEASE LOOK FORWARD TO ANSWERING TO ME!

THAT'S AN INTELLIGENT SON YOU HAVE.
HE'S ALSO VERY TOLERANT.
フッフッ
THAT'S QUITE SOME-THING.
YOU'VE BEEN BLESSED WITH A GOOD SUCCESSOR, MR. KASHINO.

はぁ…

IT'S TIRING.
IS THIS WORLD THAT DIFFICULT FOR YOU?
RACING BIKES IS TIRING TOO, BUT...
...WEIRD POWER BATTLES BETWEEN PEOPLE ARE MORE EXHAUSTING.

!
ガバッ
DON'T ACT LIKE A SCARED KID PLAYING HOOKY.
I'M NOT THE PRINCIPAL COMING TO SCOLD YOU.
.....

NOW THAT YOU'VE ENTERED THE CORPORATE WORLD..
..PEOPLE WILL EITHER FLATTER YOU, OR WISH YOU ILL WILL.
I'M AFRAID THAT WON'T EVER CHANGE.
CAN YOU GET BY IN THIS WORLD?

YOU CAN'T SAY IT'S EASY.
BUT I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE, RIGHT?
DIDN'T YOU GIVE UP YOUR DREAMS TOO?

EVEN WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I THOUGHT I WAS SUPPOSED TO FOLLOW IN MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS...
...AND I WASN'T TAUGHT ANY DIFFERENTLY.
...I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE.
UNLIKE YOU OR AKIHIKO.
THE FACT THAT I DON'T TRULY UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS...
...ISN'T THE ONLY REASON I DON'T WANT YOU TO RACE MOTORCYCLES.

IT'S BECAUSE I SAW YOUR FATHER AKIHIKO...
...LIVE THE WAY HE WANTED TO AND THEN DIE TRAGICALLY.
AKIHIKO DIDN'T DIE IN AN ORDINARY CAR ACCIDENT.
HE CRASHED DURING A RACE AND THE CAR EXPLODED.

JUST LIKE YOU, AKIHIKO LOVED MOTOR-SPORTS WHEN HE WAS YOUNG.
I HOPED HE'D OUT GROW IT, BUT HE NEVER DID.
RACE...?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND..
...HOW THAT'S WORTH RISKING YOUR LIFE FOR.

I DON'T THINK I'M RISKING MY LIFE.
I JUST WANT TO RIDE...
...AS FAST AS I CAN.

I'M SURE...
...AKIHIKO DOESN'T HAVE REGRETS...
...RISKING HIS LIFE FOR SOMETHING HE LOVES.
I'M SURE HE ENJOYED RACING, EVEN UP TO THAT MOMENT.
NOT FOR ANYONE ELSE, BUT JUST FOR HIMSELF.

EVEN IF IT WAS A TRAGIC ENDING,
I'M SURE HE WAS HAPPY LIVING THE LIFE HE REALLY WANTED.
A BUSINESS AFFECTS HUNDREDS, IF NOT THOUSANDS, OF PEOPLE.
YOU HAVE TO THINK OF ONE'S CONSEQUENCES.
THAT'S NOT ALL THAT MATTERS.

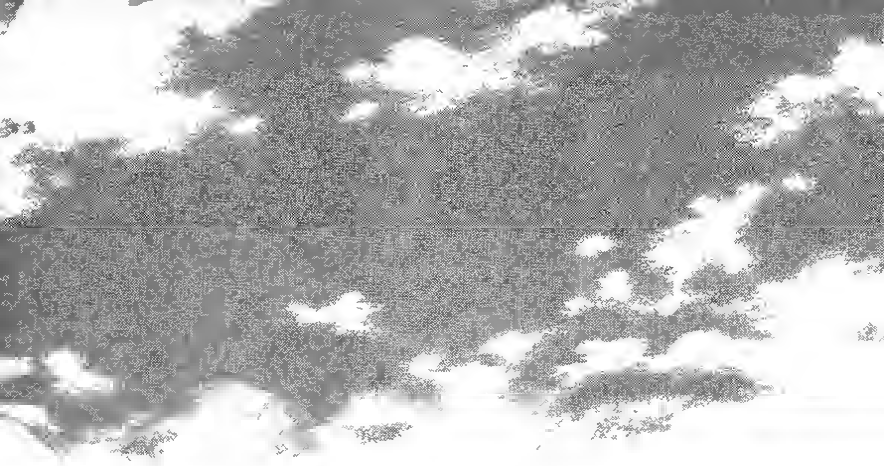
YOU CAN'T JUST LIVE TO MAKE YOURSELF HAPPY.
IF YOU'RE THE MANAGER, YOU HAVE TO PROTECT YOUR COMPANY... THE EMPLOYEES, UNTIL THE VERY END.
OTHERWISE, YOU'VE FAILED AS A MANAGER.

I'M TELLING YOU—YOU CAN'T DO IT.
WHAT... DOES THAT MEAN?
WHAT?
WHA...?
IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE YOU'RE MANAGER MATERIAL.
I CAN'T LET YOU TAKE OVER THE OAK GROUP.
DO WHAT YOU WANT.
I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE EXPECTATIONS OF YOU.

REI..
WHY ARE YOU SO PASSIONATE ABOUT THIS?
..
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH..
..I DON'T REALLY KNOW.

MAYBE BECAUSE I'M STUPID.
namco
namco
NGK
NGK

DENSO
BRIDGESTONE
POTENZA

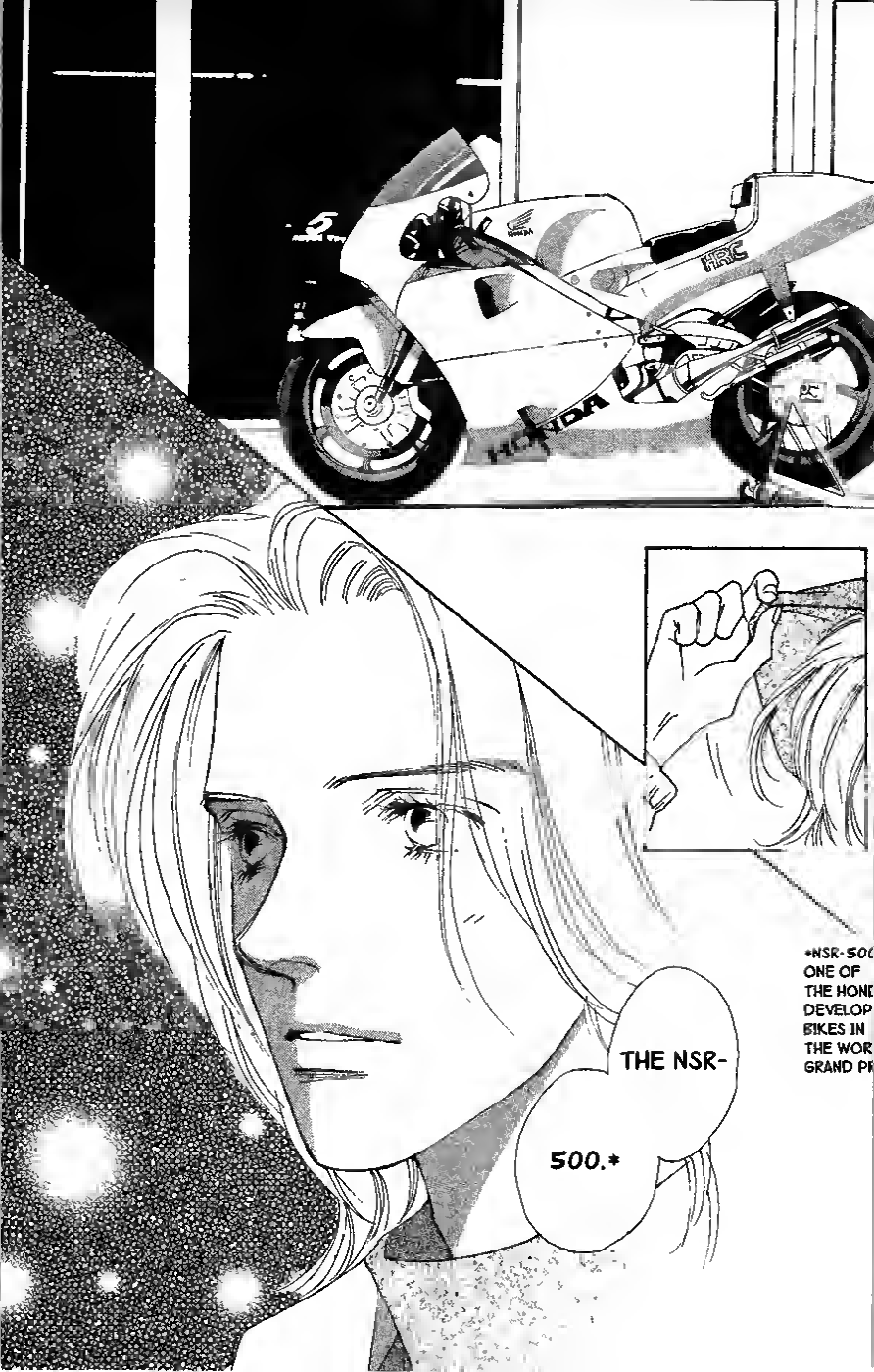


MARS

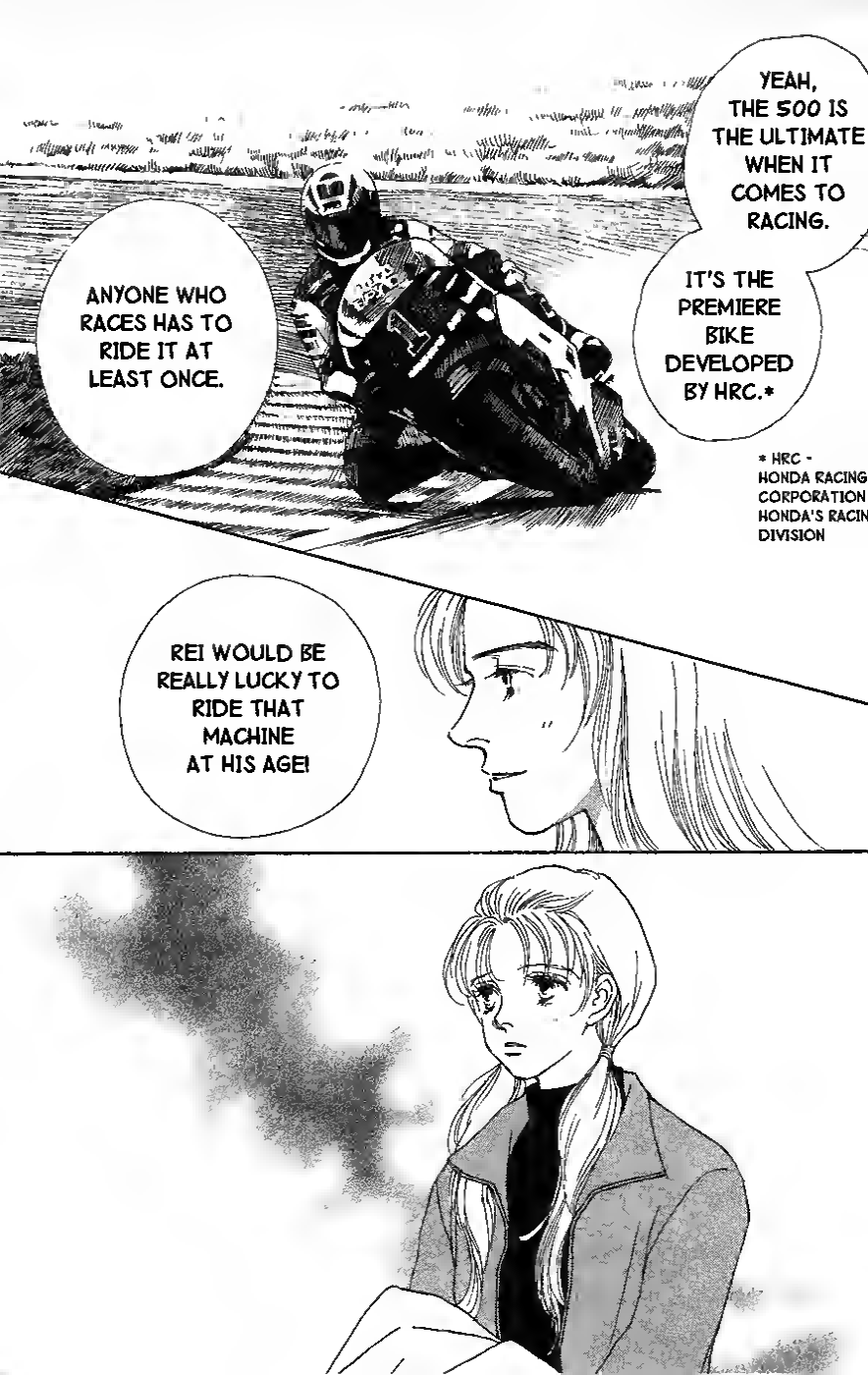
I've gone to
the racetrack.
-Rei

GOOD MORNING!
REI!
KURIO!
WOW, I'M SO EXCITED TO BE ABLE TO WORK WITH YOU AGAIN!
MY ADRENALINE FROM THE EIGHT-HOUR IS COMING BACK.
HEY,
YOU'RE THE MECHANIC FROM MY EIGHT-HOUR.
UMMM...

OH THEY'RE ALL STILL SLEEPING.
IT'S MY FIRST TEST RUN TODAY, SO I THOUGHT I'D RUN OVER HERE FROM THE HOTEL TO WARM UP.
YOU'RE REALLY EARLY THOUGH.
HEY?! WHAT ABOUT KATAYAMA AND THE OTHERS?
HEY, HEY,
WHICH MACHINE WILL I BE TESTING?
IT'S EASILY 6 KMS FROM THERE!
YOU RAN..
..FROM THE HOTEL?


HONDA
THE NSR-
500.*
*NSR-500
ONE OF
THE HOND
DEVELOP
BIKES IN
THE WOR
GRAND PR

HE WASN'T THERE WHEN I WOKE UP.
WHAT?! REI WENT TO THE RACETRACK ALREADY?
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
HE'S ACTING LIKE HE'S GOING ON A SCHOOL FIELD TRIP OR SOMETHING.
JUST BECAUSE YOU ARRIVE EARLY DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN RIDE THE NSR-500.
IS THE NSR-500 REALLY THAT GREAT OF A BIKE?


YEAH, THE 500 IS THE ULTIMATE WHEN IT COMES TO RACING.
IT'S THE PREMIERE BIKE DEVELOPED BY HRC.*
ANYONE WHO RACES HAS TO RIDE IT AT LEAST ONCE.
* HRC - HONDA RACING CORPORATION HONDA'S RACIN DIVISION
REI WOULD BE REALLY LUCKY TO RIDE THAT MACHINE AT HIS AGE!

OH LOOK,
YOU CAN SEE IT NOW. THAT'S SUZUKA.

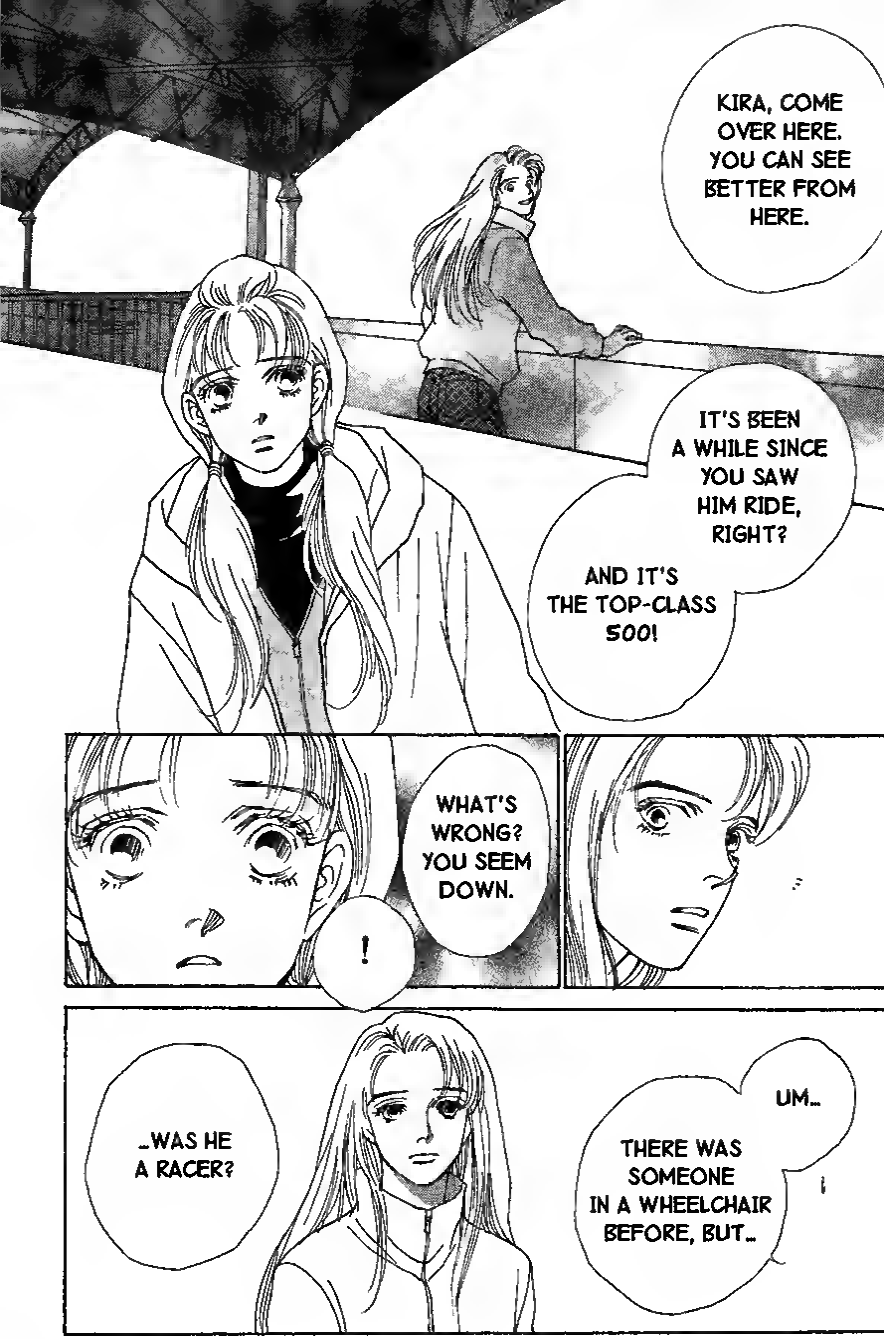
WOW!
IT'S SO BIG!
ACTUALLY, FOR A RACETRACK, IT'S NOT THAT BIG.
IN FACT, COMPARED TO A LOT OF TRACKS, THIS IS SMALL.
REI!

REI!
HE'S ON THE 500!
HE CAN'T HEAR YOU BECAUSE OF THE NOISE FROM THE ENGINE.
KIRA, OVER HERE.

WOW! SO THIS IS WHAT THE BACK OF THE TRACK LOOKS LIKE.
THERE'S A LOT OF STUFF AROUND, SO BE CAREFUL.
KIRA, HURRY UP!
.....

I WANT TO BE A PROFESSIONAL RACER.
I DON'T JUST WANT TO BE FAST, I WANT TO BE THE BEST.
YOU'LL STAND BY ME, WON'T YOU?

YOU'LL STAND BY ME,
WON'T YOU?


KIRA, COME OVER HERE. YOU CAN SEE BETTER FROM HERE.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE YOU SAW HIM RIDE, RIGHT?
AND IT'S THE TOP-CLASS 500!
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU SEEM DOWN.
!
..WAS HE A RACER?
UM..
THERE WAS SOMEONE IN A WHEELCHAIR BEFORE, BUT..

THAT'S RIGHT.
HE USED TO BE A RACER TOO, BUT..
..HE LOST BOTH LEGS AND HIS ARM IN AN ACCIDENT.
HE WON'T BE ABLE TO RIDE EVER AGAIN..
HE'S LEADING A NEW LIFE AS A MEMBER OF THE TEAM STAFF..
..JUST LIKE MY HUSBAND WHO'S COACHING THE RACING TEAM.

GUYS LIKE THIS DON'T REGRET ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS...
...EVEN IF IT MEANS LOSING THEIR LIFE.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
THAT'S WHO WE FELL IN LOVE WITH.

I'LL GO GET US SOMETHING TO DRINK.
ARE YOU A RELATIVE OF KYOKO'S?
!

I REMEMBER HER SAYING SHE HAD A SISTER IN COLLEGE.
!
OH, I KNOW. YOU'RE HER SISTER?!
OH...
NO, I'M...
HEY!
I GUESS THE TIRES HAVE WARMED UP BY NOW.

MAYBE YOU KNOW HIM. HE RAN A CRAZY RIDE ON AN EIGHT-HOUR LAST YEAR.
HE ENDED UP BEING DISQUALIFIED, BUT...
THE KID WHO'S RIDING RIGHT NOW IS KASHINO,
HE'S ONLY 18.
...HE'S PROBABLY GOING TO BE RIDING THE 500 NEXT YEAR.
HOEI

THE POWER!!

THE ACCELERATION!!!

2'08.957
カチッ
I GET AROUND THE LAST CORNER AND GET INTO THE HOME STRETCH AND THEN..
..BEFORE I KNOW IT, THE FIRST CORNER IS THERE.
..IN THE EIGHT-SECOND RANGE?!
HE'S RAISING IT RIGHT OFF AGAIN.
DENS
I KNOW HE'S USED TO SUPER-BIKES, BUT TODAY'S HIS FIRST 500, RIGHT?
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOING FOR SEVEN SECONDS.
THERE'S NOT EVEN TIME TO TAKE A BREATH..
SEVEN SECONDS? ARE YOU SERIOUS?

HE'S GOING FULL-THROTTLE NOW!
UM... THIS IS A TEST, RIGHT?
TO TEST A NEW BIKE?
WELL, CHECKING OUT THE BIKE'S POTENTIAL IS PART OF IT.
BUT THE TRUE TEST IS TO SEE ITS CAPABILITIES TESTED WITH A RIDER LIKE KASHINO.

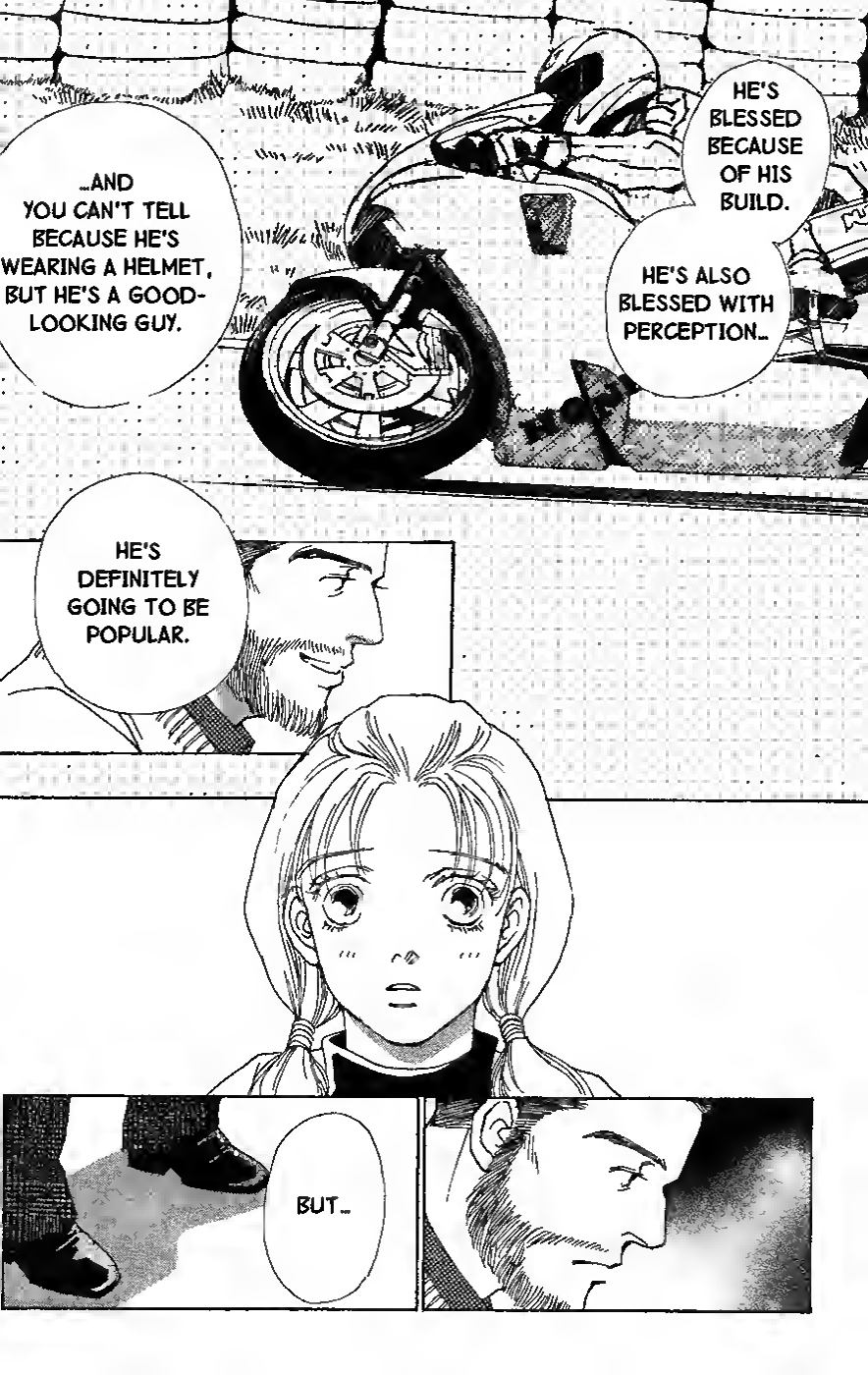
WHO'S THAT MAN?
THIS MAN IS FROM THAT PICTURE...
HE'S A BIG SHOT FROM HONDA.
HE CAME BACK TO JAPAN JUST TO WATCH REI RACE, EVEN THOUGH THE RACES WERE GOING ON IN EUROPE.
KASHINO'S INTERESTING.

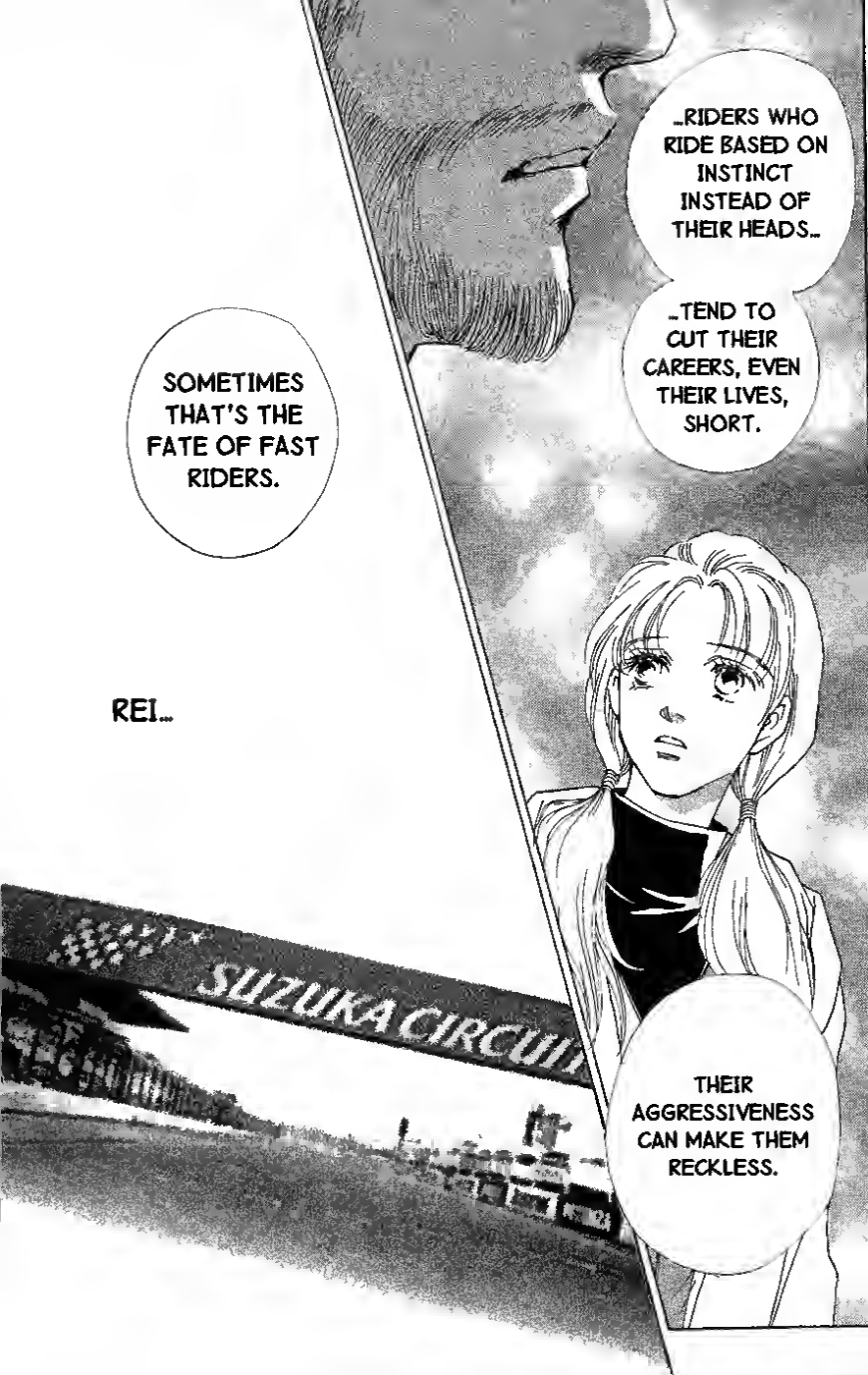
THERE ARE A LOT OF RACING STYLES.
THERE ARE RIDERS WHO WIN IN THE LAST SECOND, AND THOSE WHO END UP WINNING BECAUSE OF THEIR TECHNIQUE.
THERE'S QUITE A DIVERSITY.
YOU CAN'T COMPARE THE TWO, BUT FOR SOME REASON, PEOPLE ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE STYLE OF THE RIDER THEY'RE WATCHING.
KASHINO DEFINITELY HAS A STYLE ALL HIS OWN!
HONDA

SEVEN SECONDS-860!
おお――――っ
HE'S RIDING CRAZY. AT THIS RATE, HE'LL PROBABLY GO FOR IT.
SIX SECONDS!
YES!
HE'S BROKEN EIGHT SECONDS!!
NO, I THINK HE'S LOOKING TO BREAK FIVE SECONDS!

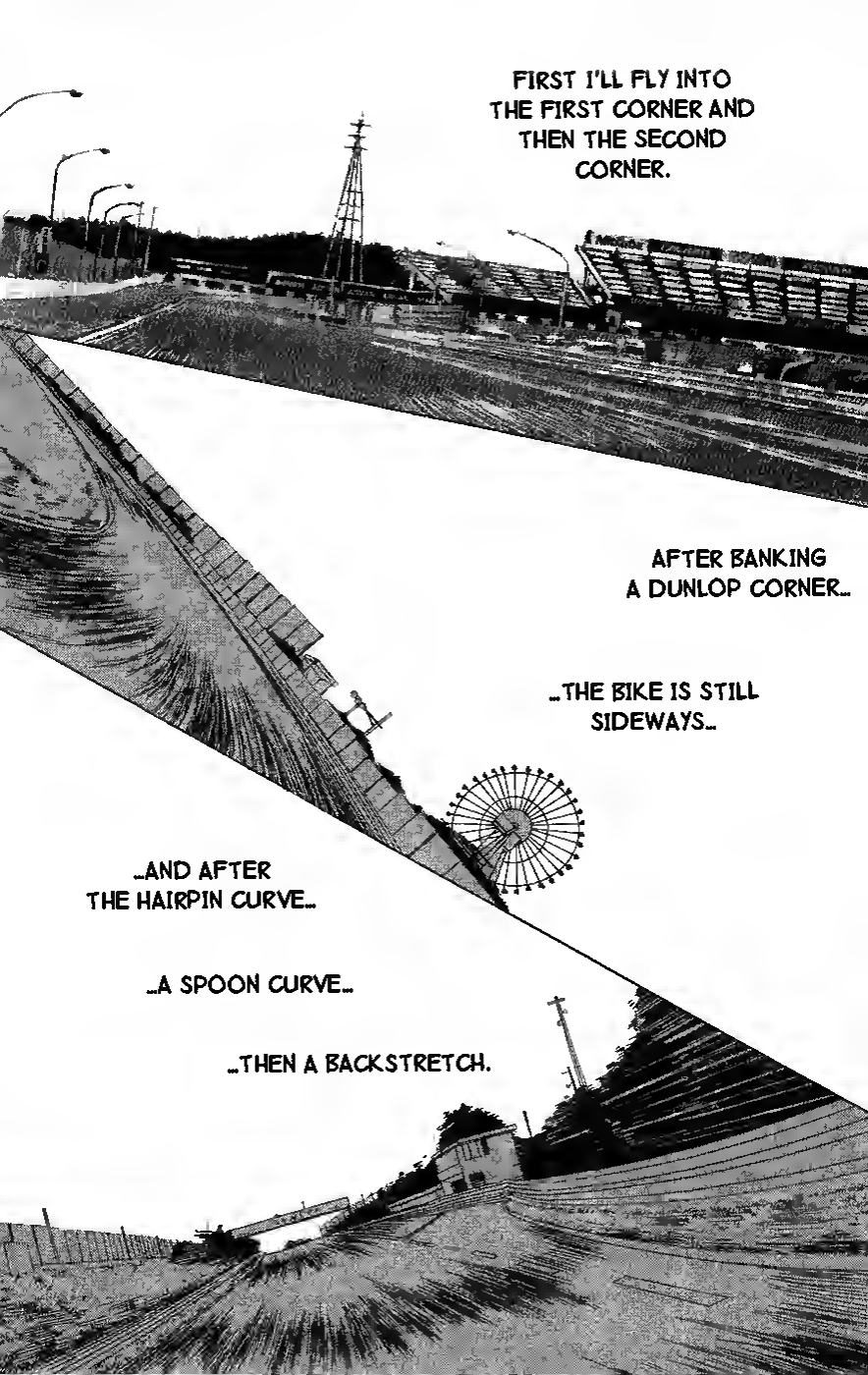
..HE WAS SAYING BEFORE HE STARTED RIDING..
B-BUT..
NO WAY! EVEN WITH EVERY-THING..
..IT'S HIS FIRST TIME RIDING A 500 TODAY.
WHAT?
WHAT'S SUZUKA'S LAP RECORD?

IN '98, THERE WAS A TWO MINUTE, FIVE SECOND-772 THAT A MAX PIAGGI GOT.
WHAT'S THE LAP RECORD?
THE FIVE-SECOND RANGE...
...NO WAY!
SIX SECONDS-925!


HE'S BLESSED BECAUSE OF HIS BUILD.
HE'S ALSO BLESSED WITH PERCEPTION..
..AND YOU CAN'T TELL BECAUSE HE'S WEARING A HELMET, BUT HE'S A GOOD-LOOKING GUY.
HE'S DEFINITELY GOING TO BE POPULAR.
BUT..


..RIDERS WHO RIDE BASED ON INSTINCT INSTEAD OF THEIR HEADS..
..TEND TO CUT THEIR CAREERS, EVEN THEIR LIVES, SHORT.
SOMETIMES THAT'S THE FATE OF FAST RIDERS.
REI...
SUZUKA CIRCUIT
THEIR AGGRESSIVENESS CAN MAKE THEM RECKLESS.

I CAN DO IT!
I CAN DEFINITELY DO THE NEXT ONE.
I'VE RACED THE SUZUKA COURSE ENOUGH TO HATE IT.
SIX SECONDS-284!


FIRST I'LL FLY INTO THE FIRST CORNER AND THEN THE SECOND CORNER.
AFTER BANKING A DUNLOP CORNER..
..THE BIKE IS STILL SIDEWAYS..
..AND AFTER THE HAIRPIN CURVE..
..A SPOON CURVE..
..THEN A BACKSTRETCH.

YOU CAN'T SEE WELL,
BUT YOU OPEN IT UP!!
AWWWWRIGHT!

HE'S RIDING IT!!
HE'S RIDING IT LIKE CRAZY!
THE LAP RECORD IS MINE!

HONDA

HE DID IT...
...A HIGH-SIDE*?!
REI!!
THE MOTORCYCLE FALLS AS
F TRIPPING BECAUSE OF
DELAYED BODY CHANGE

MARS

CRAP!
HE'S DONE IT!!

OH NO!!
SOMEBODY GET HELP!

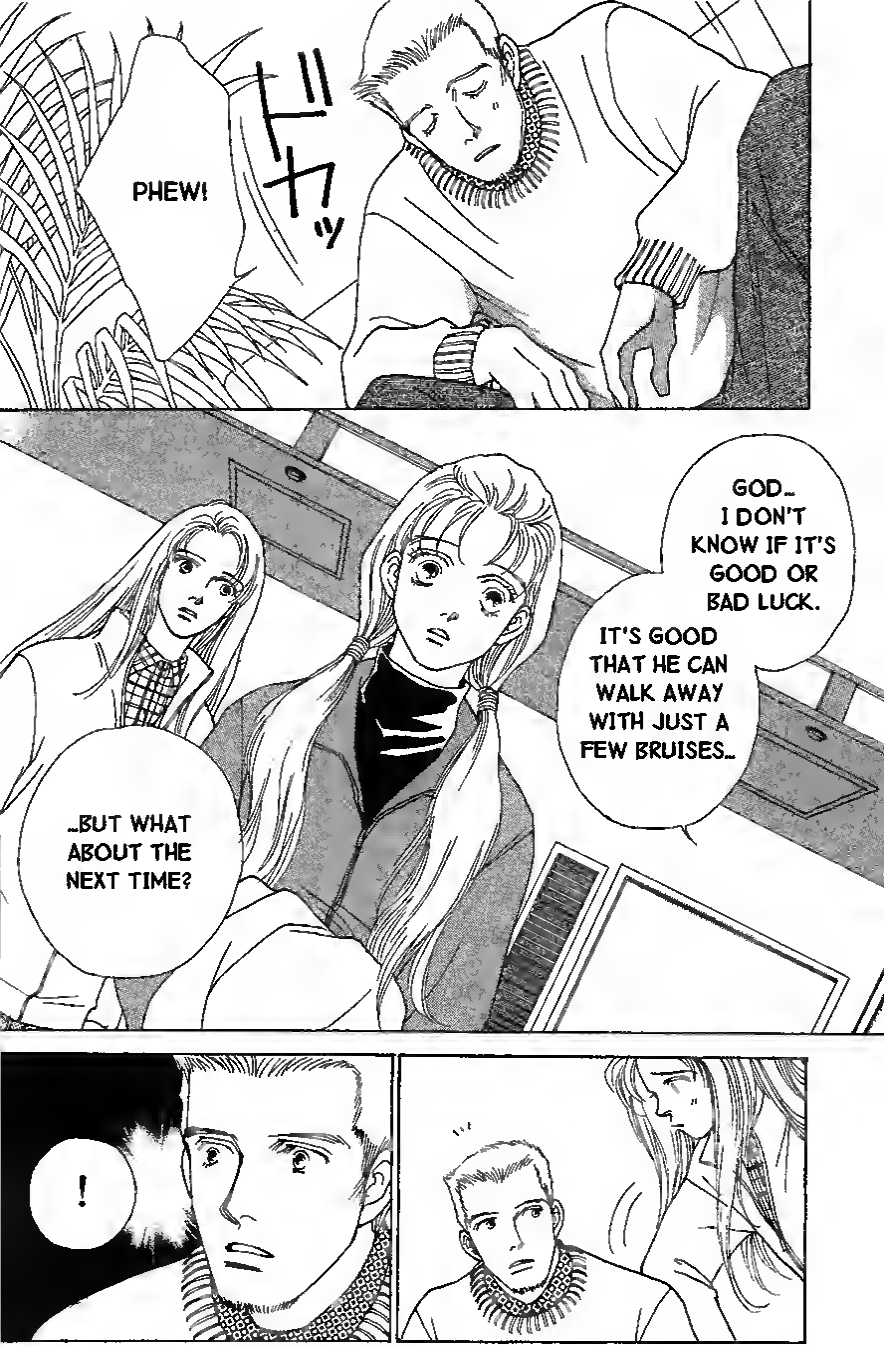
KIRA!!
Marlboro
REI!
REI!
REI!

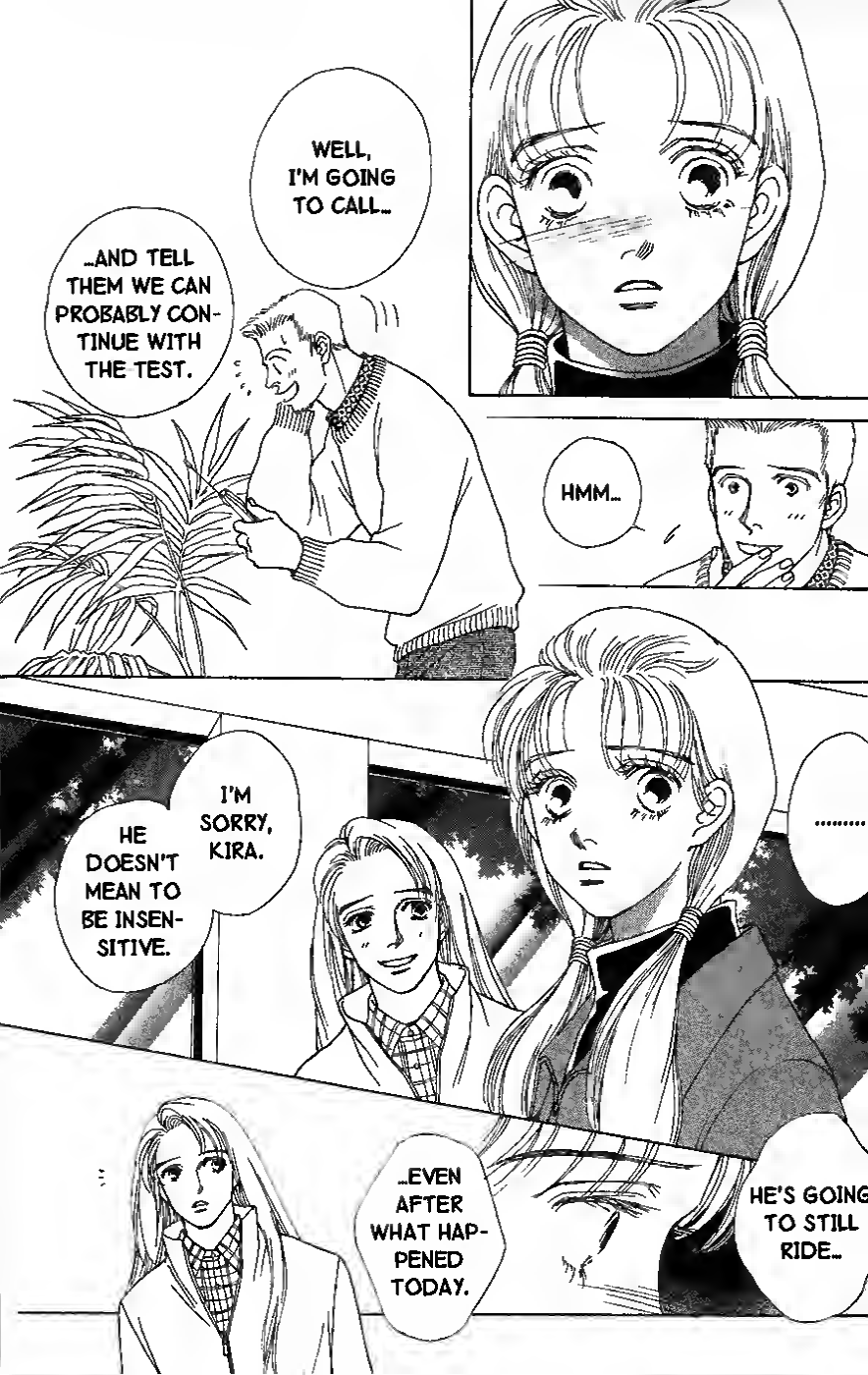
REI, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
D-DAMN.
D...
SHOEI
GODDDD!!!
I WAS DOING SO GOOD.

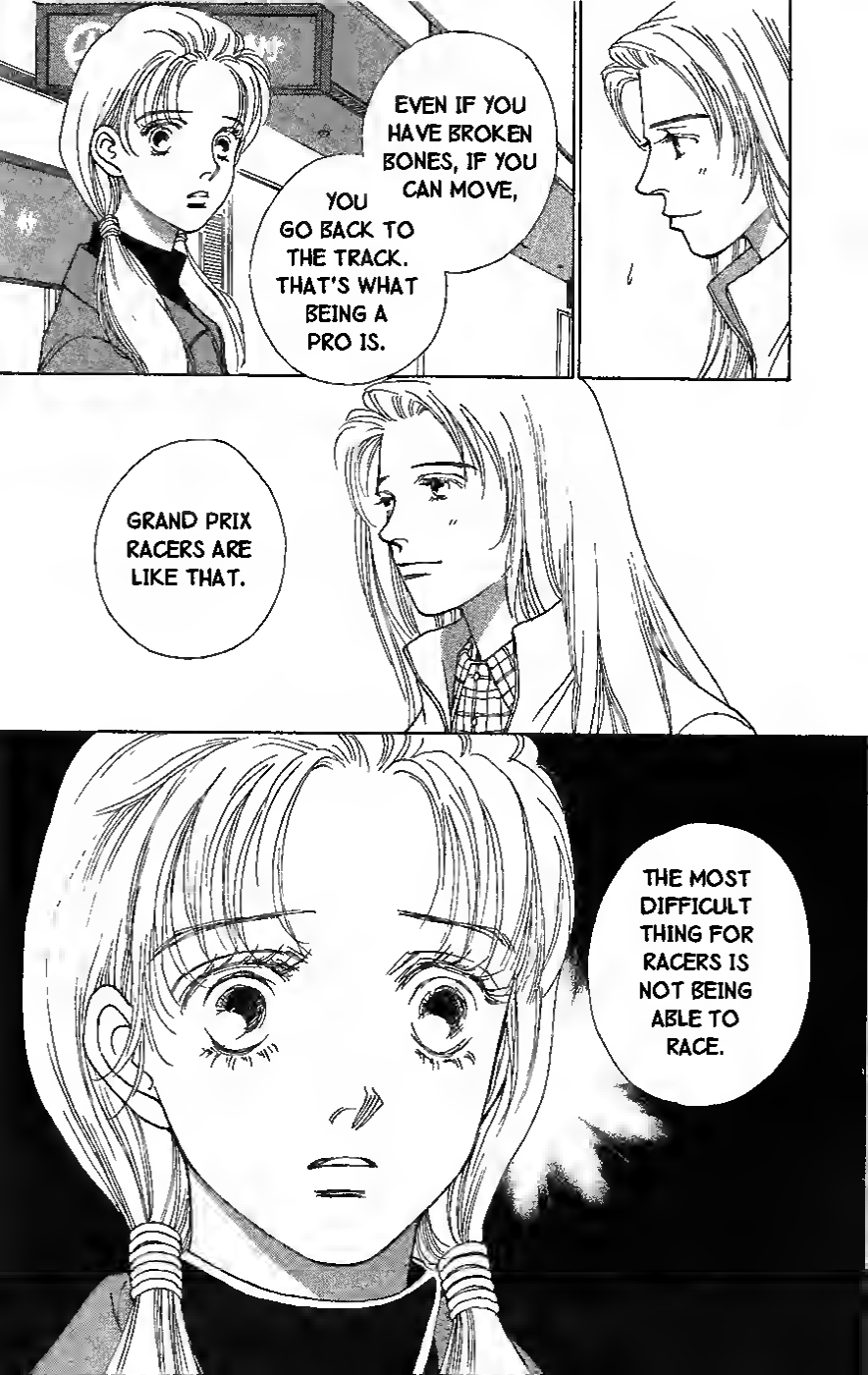
OH, IT WAS SO PERFECT.
REI?!
REALLY, JUST A LITTLE MORE...

REI?!
HONDA

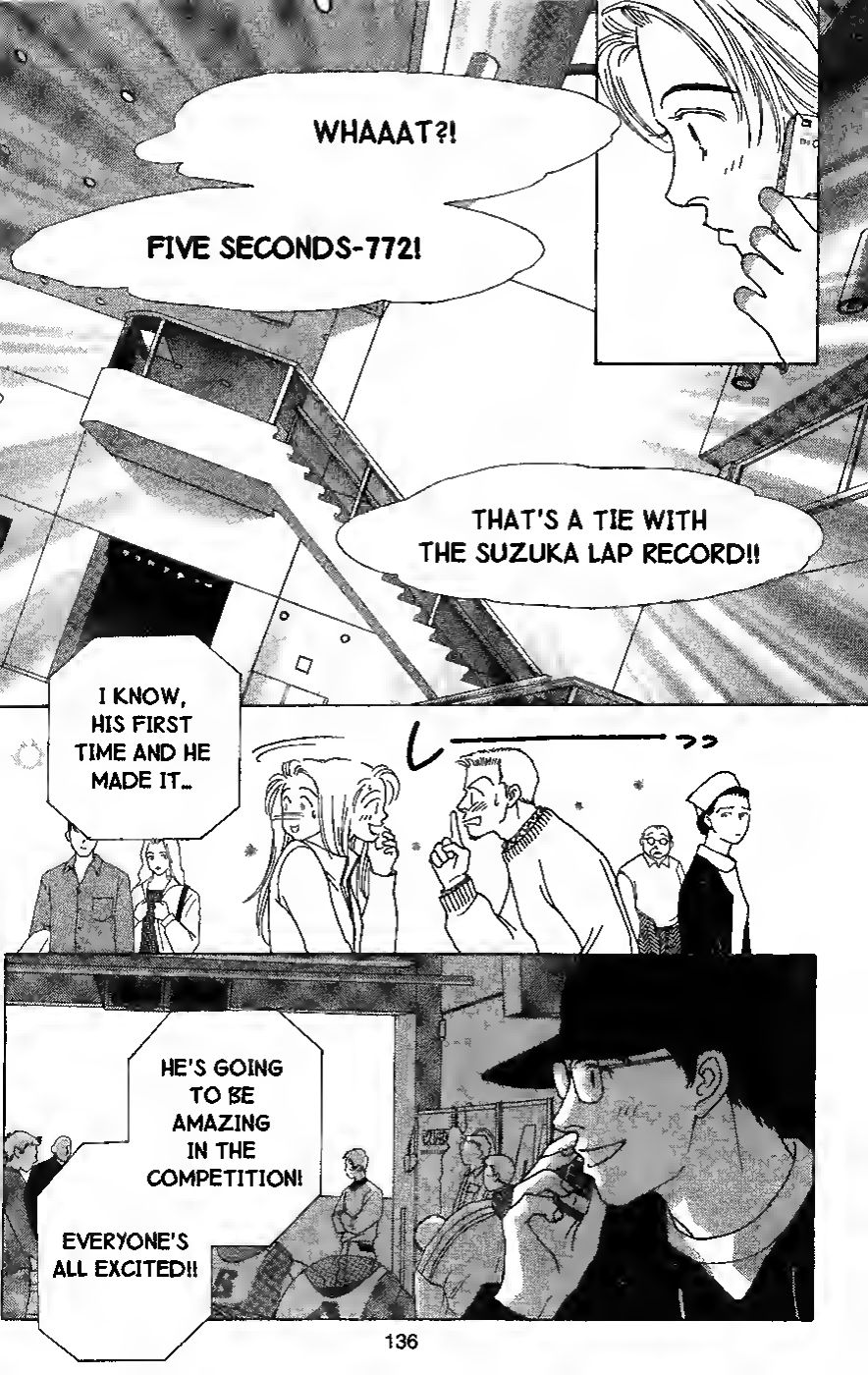
HE HAS A CONCUSSION.
WHAT?!
THAT'S IT?
YES.
I CHECKED HIS BRAIN ACTIVITY, AND EVERYTHING LOOKS NORMAL.
HE DIDN'T BREAK ANY BONES AND WALKED AWAY WITH ONLY BRUISES.

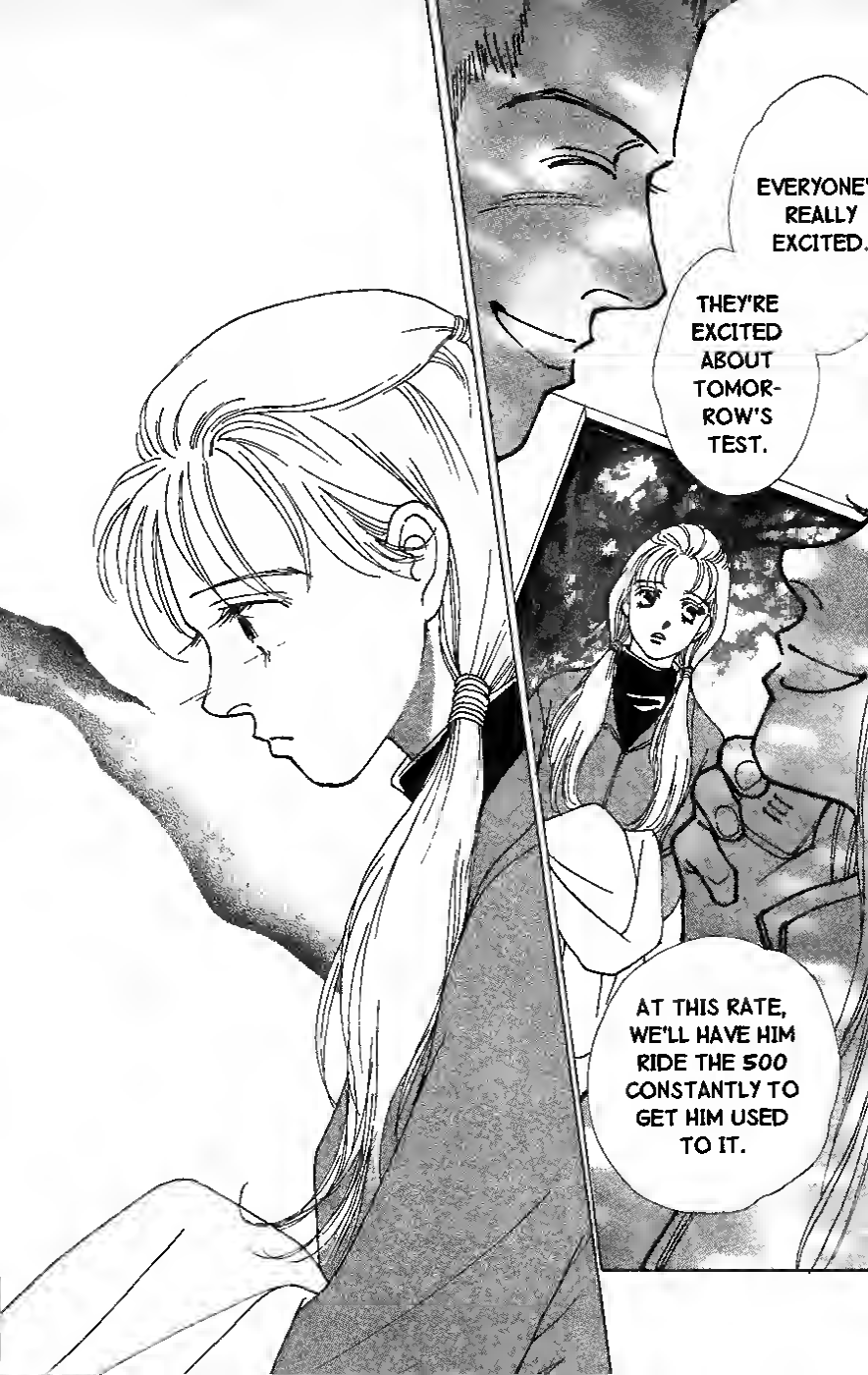

PHEW!
ドカッ
GOD... I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S GOOD OR BAD LUCK.
IT'S GOOD THAT HE CAN WALK AWAY WITH JUST A FEW BRUISES...
...BUT WHAT ABOUT THE NEXT TIME?
!


WELL, I'M GOING TO CALL..
..AND TELL THEM WE CAN PROBABLY CONTINUE WITH THE TEST.
HMM..
I'M SORRY, KIRA.
HE DOESN'T MEAN TO BE INSENSITIVE.
.....
..EVEN AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TODAY.
HE'S GOING TO STILL RIDE..


EVEN IF YOU HAVE BROKEN BONES, IF YOU CAN MOVE,
YOU GO BACK TO THE TRACK. THAT'S WHAT BEING A PRO IS.
GRAND PRIX RACERS ARE LIKE THAT.
THE MOST DIFFICULT THING FOR RACERS IS NOT BEING ABLE TO RACE.

KYOKO!
REI'S LAST LAP, IT'S...
HEY, THIS IS AMAZING!
AKITAKA, THIS IS A HOSPITAL!
HELLO, KYOKO?! THIS IS KURIO.
JUST LISTEN!!
REI'S LAST LAP WAS AMAZING.
THINGS WERE SCARY BECAUSE OF THAT CRASH, BUT GUESS WHAT HIS TIME WAS?


WHAAAT?!
FIVE SECONDS-772!
THAT'S A TIE WITH THE SUZUKA LAP RECORD!!
I KNOW, HIS FIRST TIME AND HE MADE IT...
HE'S GOING TO BE AMAZING IN THE COMPETITION!
EVERYONE'S ALL EXCITED!!


EVERYONE'
REALLY
EXCITED.
THEY'RE
EXCITED
ABOUT
TOMOR-
ROW'S
TEST.
AT THIS RATE,
WE'LL HAVE HIM
RIDE THE 500
CONSTANTLY TO
GET HIM USED
TO IT.

312
CAN YOU BELIEVE KYOKO AND AKITAKA?
YOU'RE OKAY...
...YOU MADE IT ALL IN ONE PIECE.

I WAS REALLY.. SURPRISED TODAY..
..BY THE WAY YOU RACED YOUR BIKE.
I THOUGHT MY HEART WOULD STOP.
PLEASE, DON'T BE CRAZY ANYMORE LIKE YOU WERE TODAY.

はーあ…
!
I KNOW THE POINT IS TO RIDE FAST.
I GUESS IT'S CRAZY TO BE SAYING THIS…
URR…
REI?!
URRR,
URRRRH…

AAAAAAHHHH!
REI!
THE PEDAL...
WHAT'S WRONG?
ARE YOU IN PAIN, REI?
...I LET THE PEDAL GO TOO FAST.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I MESSED UP WHEN I WAS SO CLOSE!

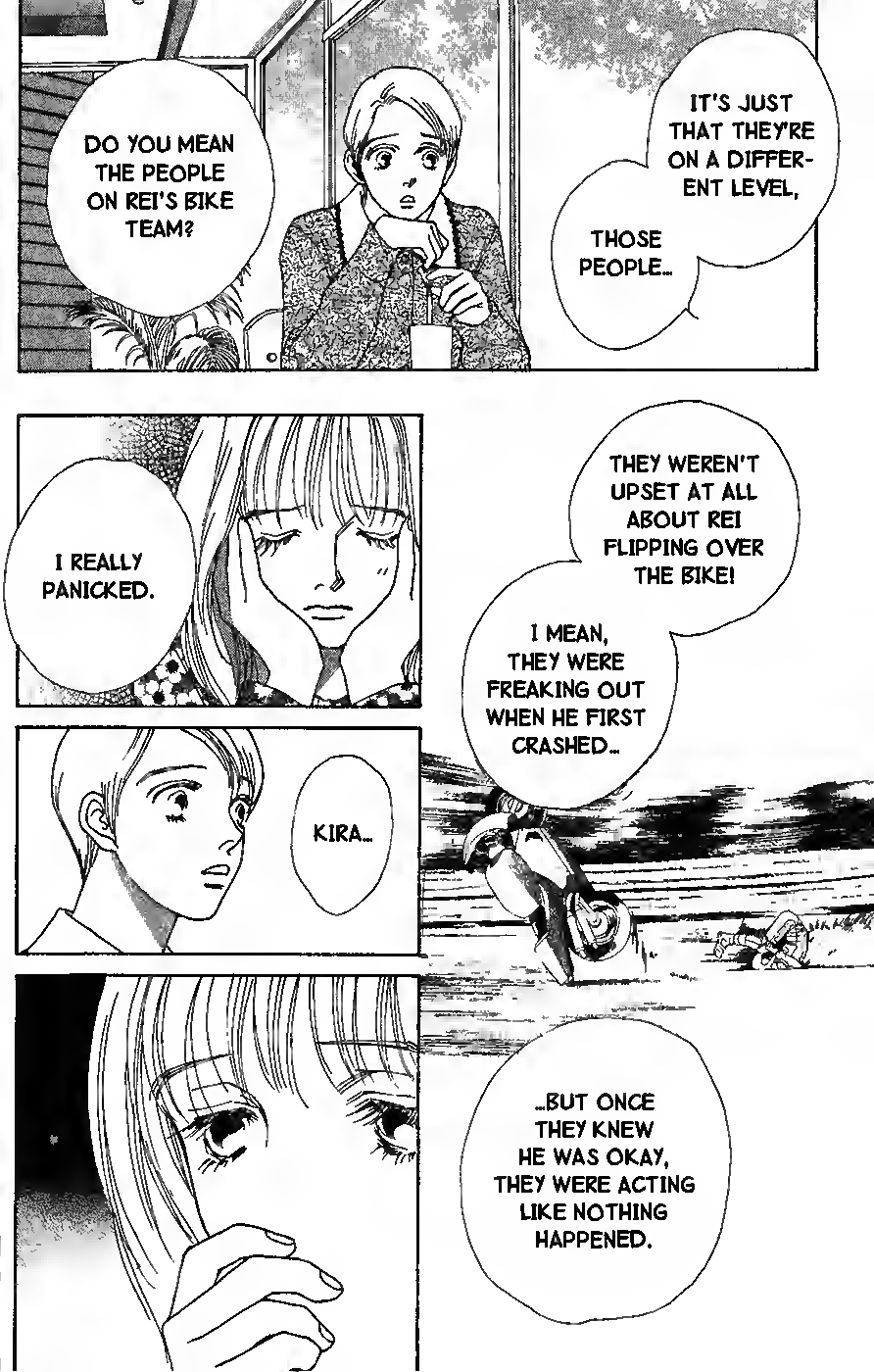
DAMMIT. I CAN'T BELIEVE I FREAKED OUT THERE!
I'M SO STUPID!
ぽろ

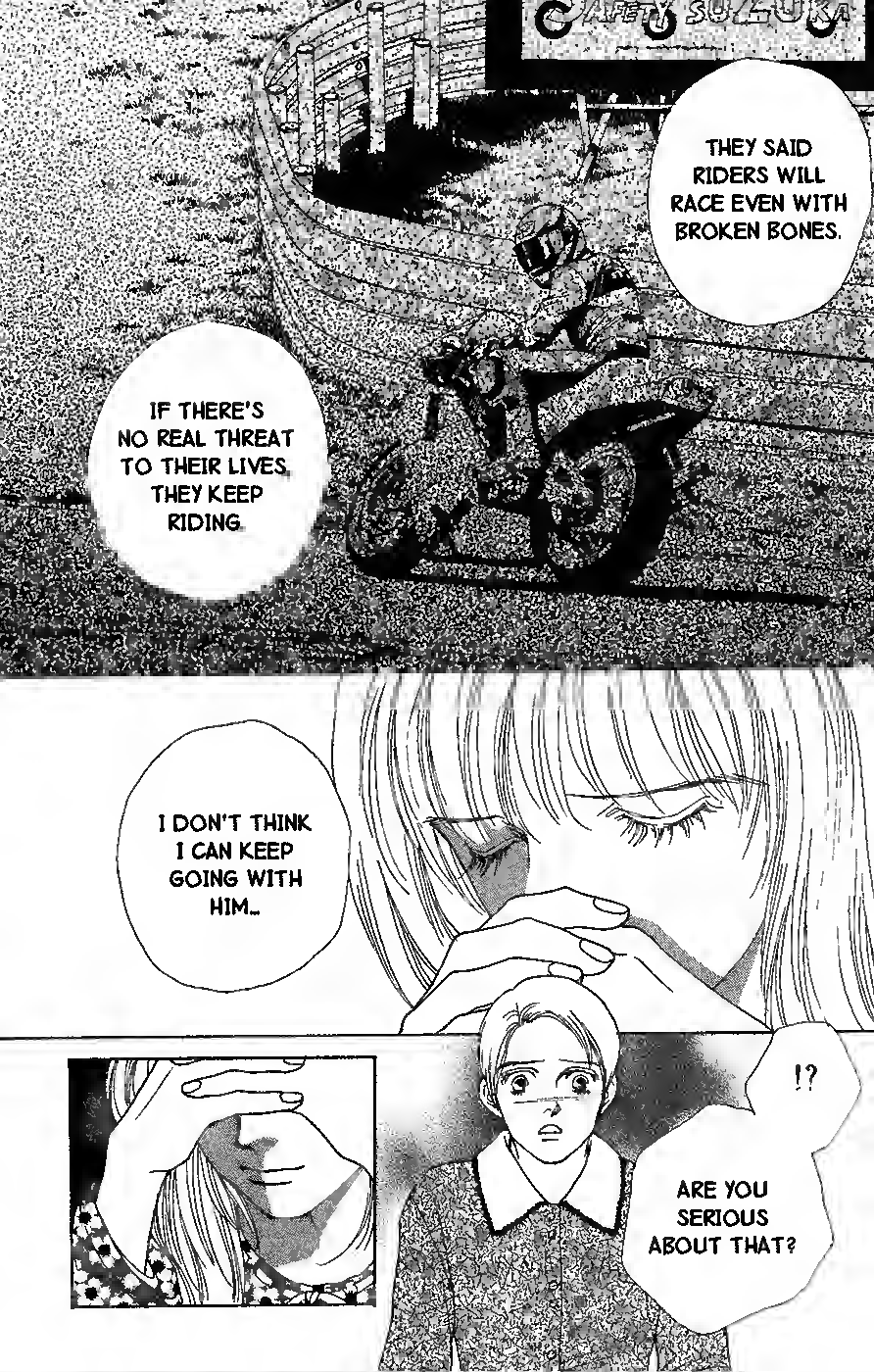
OWWWWWW!
WHA...?
WHAT'S WITH YOU ALL OF A SUDDEN?
.....

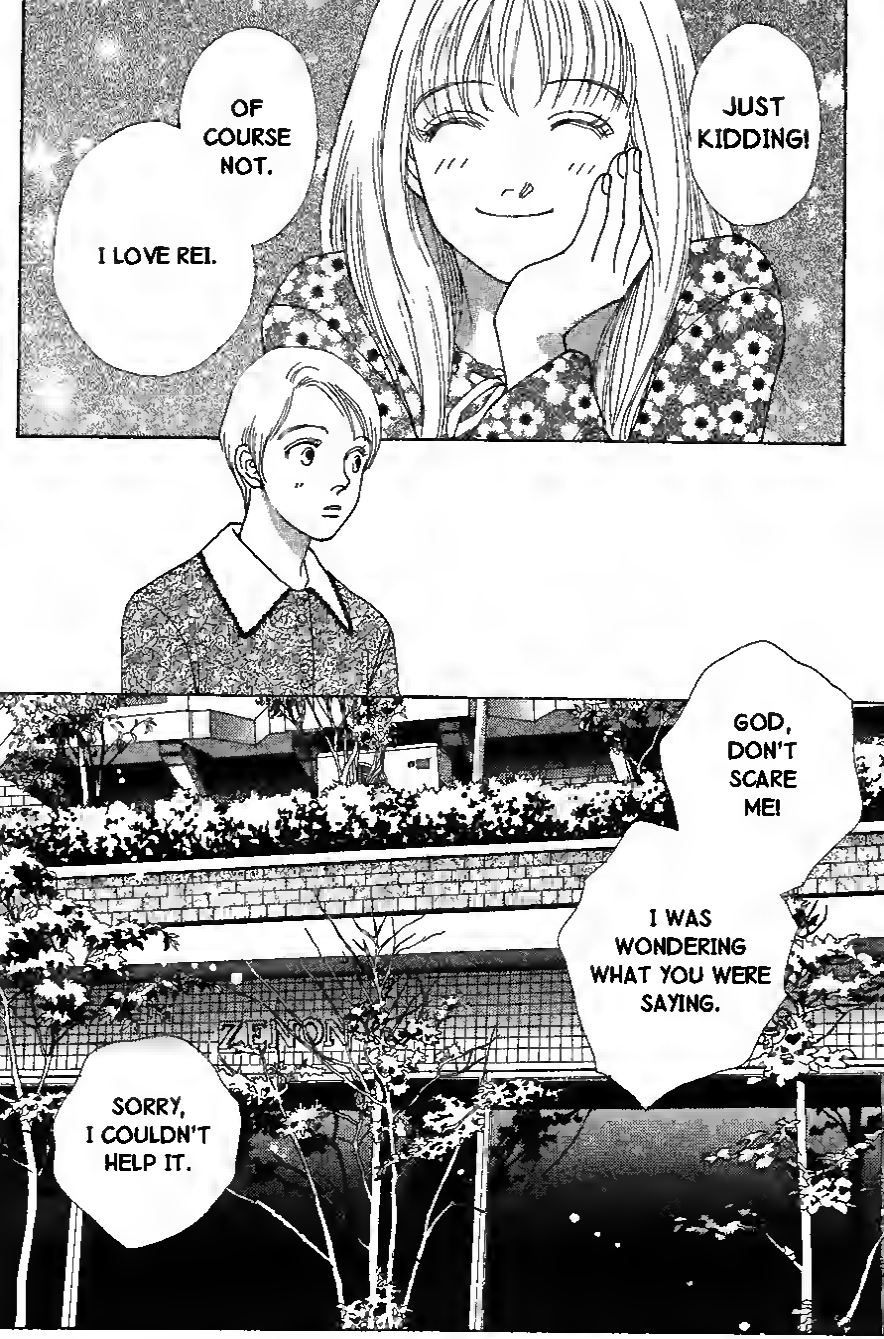
I'M GOING TO SLEEP.
PUT THE REST ON YOUR-SELF!
えっ!?
PUT THEM ON?
BUT IT'S MY BACK!
KIRA?
?
?
?

NIKOI
ASTEL

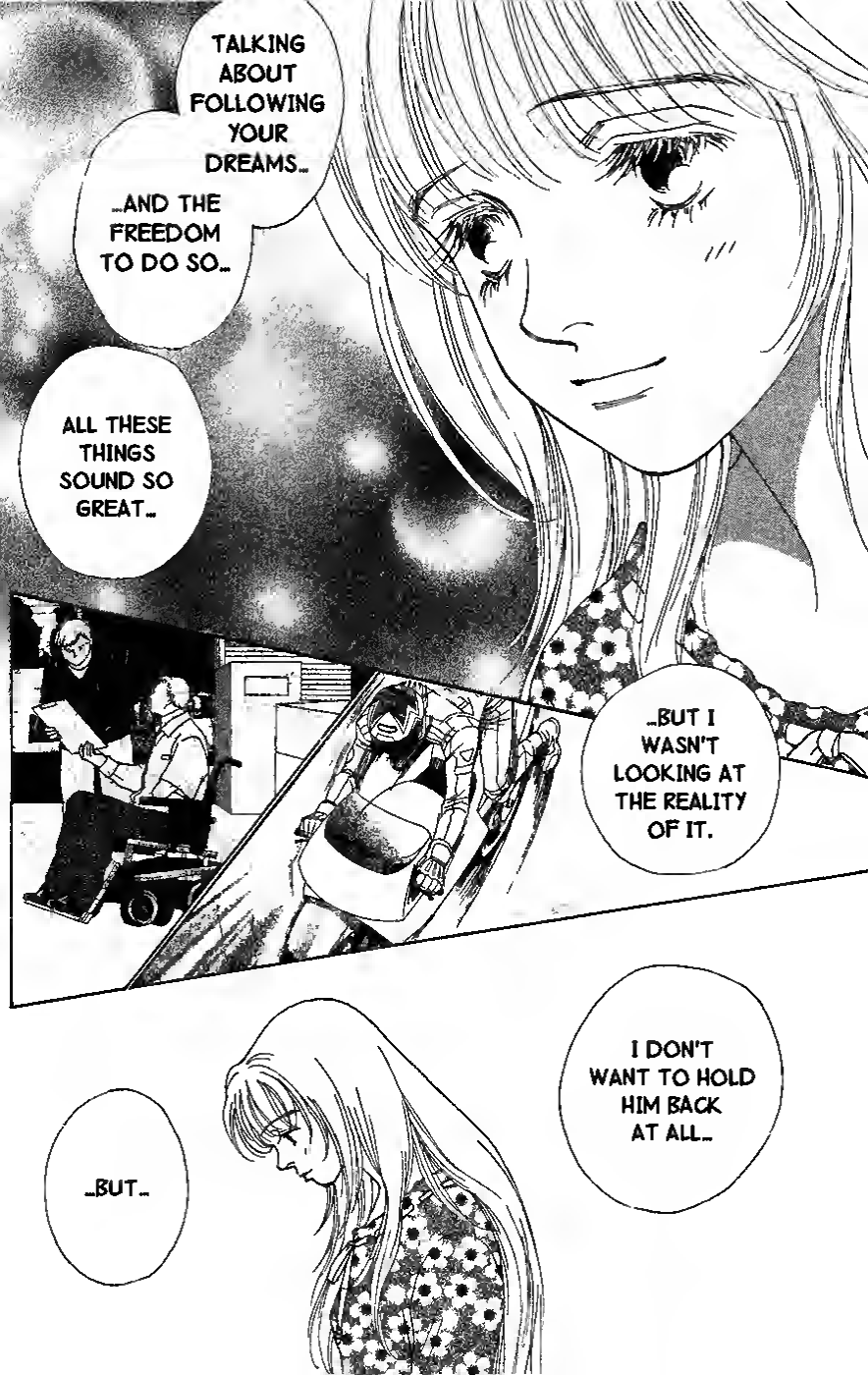
I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT.


DO YOU MEAN THE PEOPLE ON REI'S BIKE TEAM?
IT'S JUST THAT THEY'RE ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL,
THOSE PEOPLE...
I REALLY PANICKED.
THEY WEREN'T UPSET AT ALL ABOUT REI FLIPPING OVER THE BIKE!
I MEAN, THEY WERE FREAKING OUT WHEN HE FIRST CRASHED...
KIRA...
...BUT ONCE THEY KNEW HE WAS OKAY, THEY WERE ACTING LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED.


SUZUKA
THEY SAID RIDERS WILL RACE EVEN WITH BROKEN BONES.
IF THERE'S NO REAL THREAT TO THEIR LIVES, THEY KEEP RIDING.
I DON'T THINK I CAN KEEP GOING WITH HIM...
!?
ARE YOU SERIOUS ABOUT THAT?


JUST KIDDING!
OF COURSE NOT.
I LOVE REI.
GOD, DON'T SCARE ME!
I WAS WONDERING WHAT YOU WERE SAYING.
SORRY, I COULDN'T HELP IT.

WELL, OF COURSE.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CONVINCED HIS DAD TO LET HIM RETURN TO THE RACING WORLD.
THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD BE SO WEAK NOW.
DO YOU KNOW HOW DANGEROUS THAT WORLD IS?
I THINK I WAS UNDERESTI-MATING IT.


TALKING ABOUT FOLLOWING YOUR DREAMS..
..AND THE FREEDOM TO DO SO..
ALL THESE THINGS SOUND SO GREAT..
..BUT I WASN'T LOOKING AT THE REALITY OF IT.
I DON'T WANT TO HOLD HIM BACK AT ALL..
..BUT..

..I'M WORRIED..
..THAT IF I TAKE MY EYES OFF OF HIM FOR A SECOND,
I'LL LOSE SIGHT OF HIM.
I DON'T KNOW WHY I THINK THAT WAY.

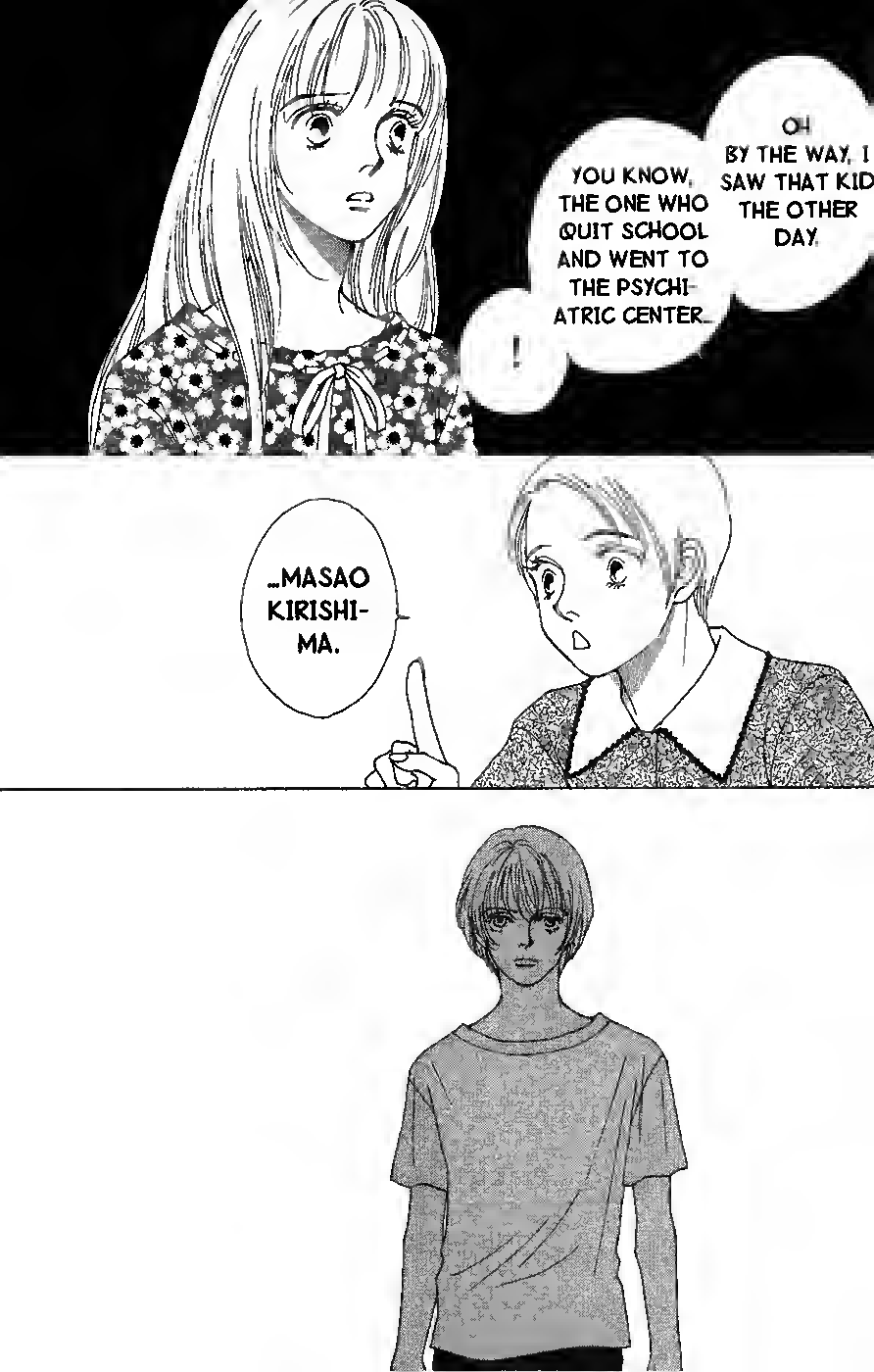
I SAY I BELIEVE IN REI. BUT REALLY, I'M SO SCARED I CAN'T TAKE IT.
I FEEL LIKE HE'LL GO AWAY.

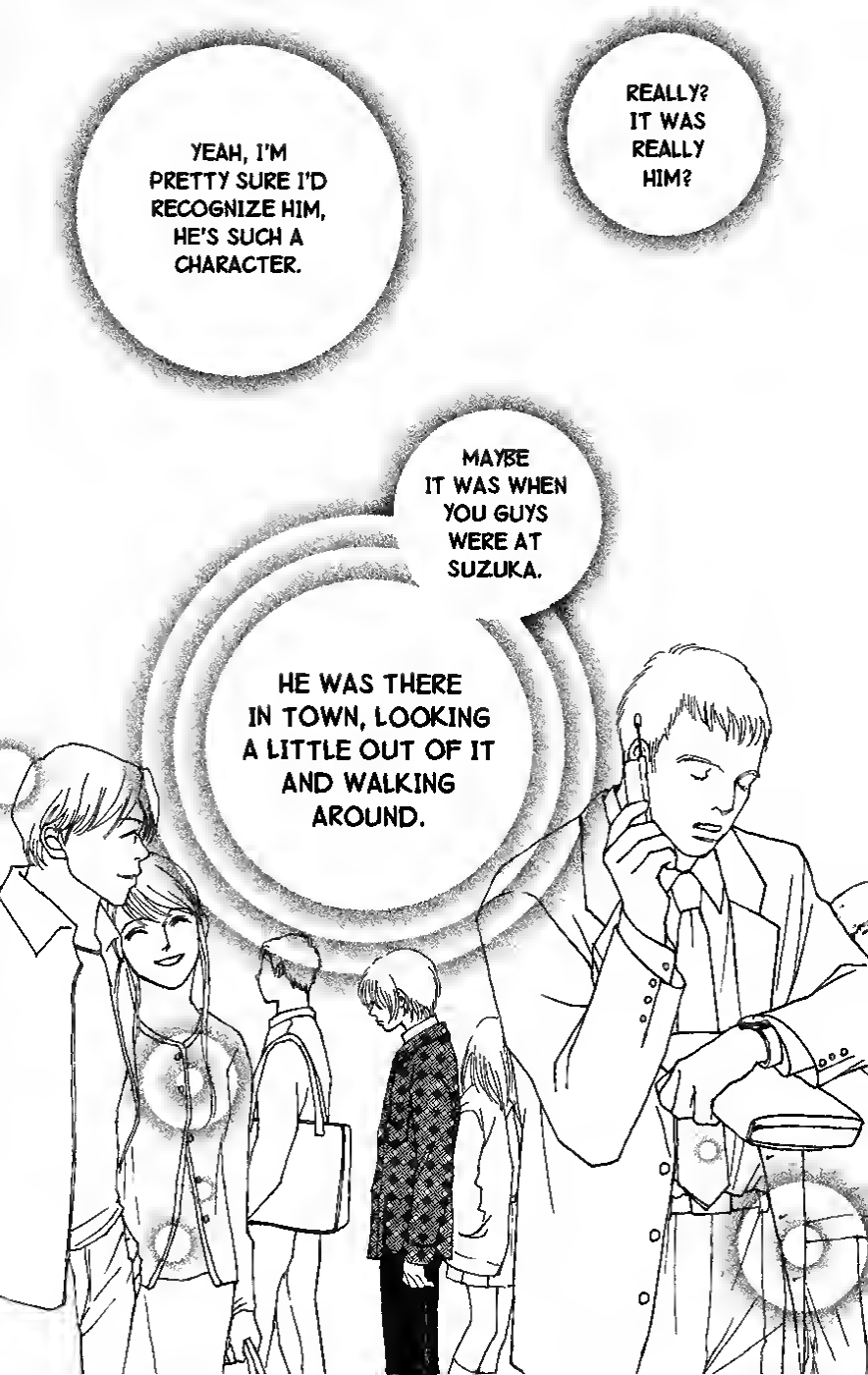
KIRA...
THAT'S HOW MUCH YOU LOVE REI.
YOU SHOULD MARRY REI.

REI'S BIRTHDAY'S COMING UP!
YOU GUYS SHOULD GET REGISTERED ONCE HE GETS BETTER.
BUT I'M STILL A STUDENT.
WHO CARES IF YOU'RE A STUDENT?
REI'S NOT JUST ANYBODY ANYMORE.
IT MAY BE JUST ABOUT A PIECE OF PAPER,
BUT IT'S A PRETTY GREAT PIECE OF PAPER, DON'T YOU THINK?
I KNOW IT SOUNDS OLD-FASHIONED, BUT...

..COMMIT-
MENTS LIKE
THAT..
..BUILD
STRONGER
BONDS WITH
PEOPLE.
HARUMI...
OH..BUT
IF THE SCHOOL
FINDS OUT,
IT WOULD BE
A BIG DEAL.

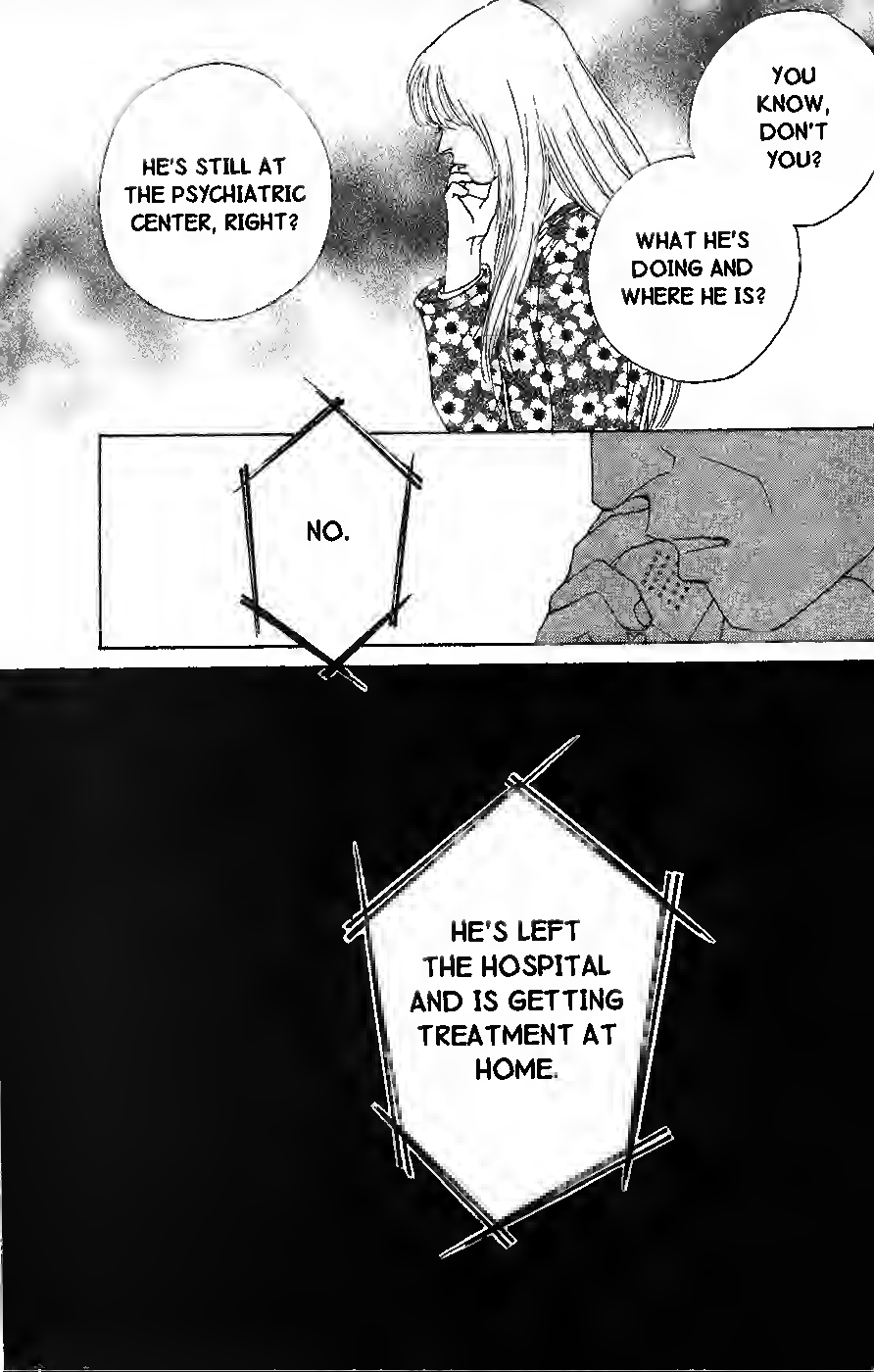
I DON'T CARE IF THEY KICK ME OUT FOR THAT.
THEN I'LL STUDY FOR MY EXAMS.
IF REI'S TRYING, I SHOULD TOO.
BUT IF THAT HAPPENS,
I'D BE SO BUMMED ABOUT NOT GRADUATING WITH YOU GUYS.
YEAH, EVEN *THAT* REI.
OH, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT *THAT* REI NOW.
!

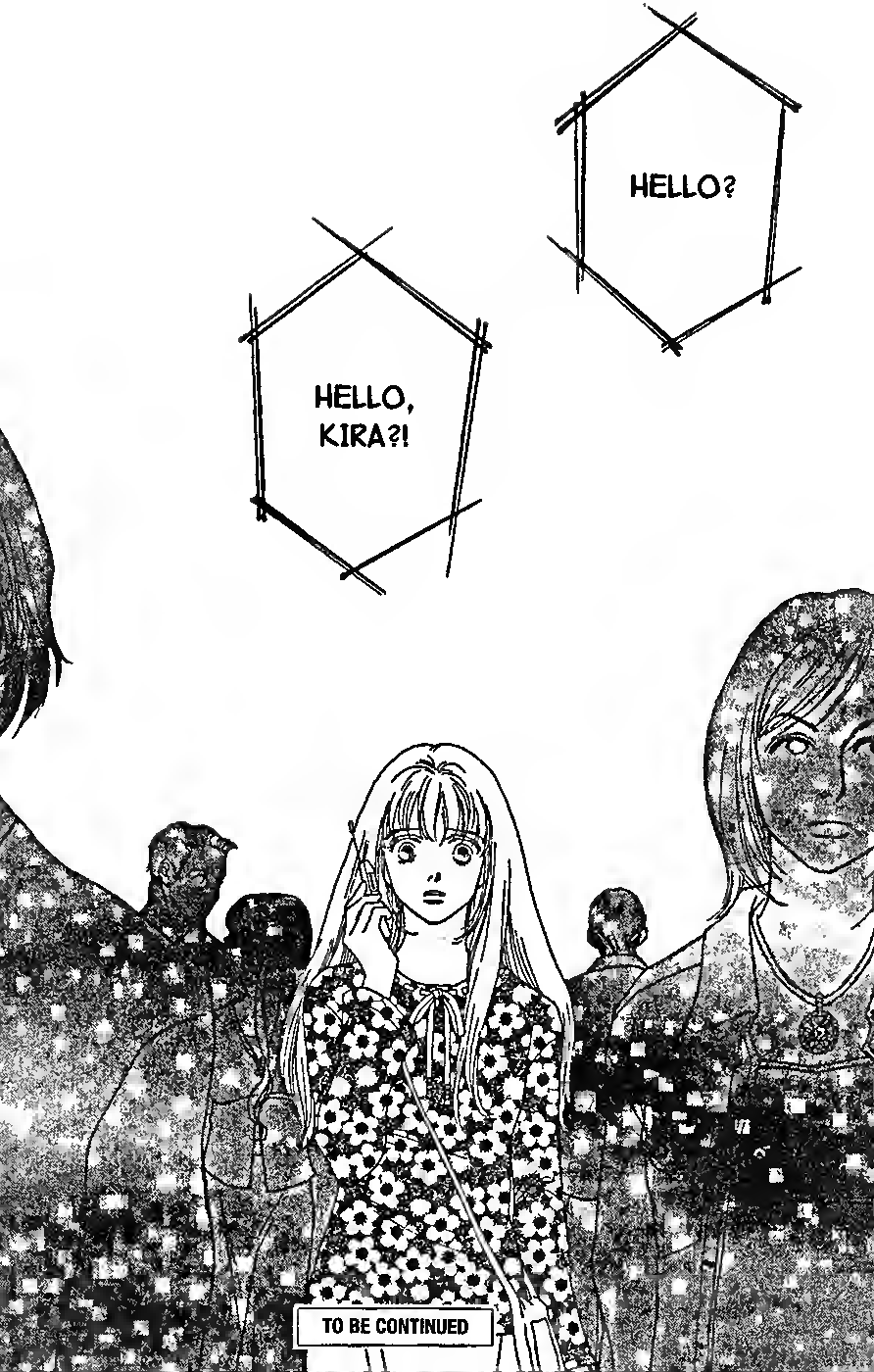

OH BY THE WAY, I SAW THAT KID THE OTHER DAY.
YOU KNOW, THE ONE WHO QUIT SCHOOL AND WENT TO THE PSYCHI-ATRIC CENTER...
!
...MASAO KIRISHI-MA.


YEAH, I'M PRETTY SURE I'D RECOGNIZE HIM, HE'S SUCH A CHARACTER.
REALLY? IT WAS REALLY HIM?
MAYBE IT WAS WHEN YOU GUYS WERE AT SUZUKA.
HE WAS THERE IN TOWN, LOOKING A LITTLE OUT OF IT AND WALKING AROUND.

KIRISHIMA LEFT
THE PSYCHIATRIC CENTER...
REALLY?!
8-20

ブルルルル…
ブルルルル…
YES, THIS IS OKUDA.
OH KIRA, HOW ARE YOU?
WHAT?!
OH!
MASAO KIRISHIMA DID WHAT?!


HE'S STILL AT THE PSYCHIATRIC CENTER, RIGHT?
YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU?
WHAT HE'S DOING AND WHERE HE IS?
NO.
HE'S LEFT THE HOSPITAL AND IS GETTING TREATMENT AT HOME.


HELLO?
HELLO, KIRA?!
TO BE CONTINUED

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Are those wedding bells ringing for Kira and Rei? They still definitely want to tie the knot, but there are tons of obstacles in their way. When Masao gets out of the hospital, he tries to harm Rei and sabotage Rei and Kira's special bond. Plus, Rei's issues about his past are preventing him from building a successful future with Kira. Can everything be resolved in time for Kira and Rei to finally walk down the aisle? All 14 previous volumes have been leading up to this spectacular, action-packed finale...

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Rei hos been working hord to become the mon his fother wonts him to be. But even though he's stuck in o cubicle, his heort is still olwoys on the rocetrock. Kiro knows thot Rei is suffering solely so he con support her, so she oppeols to Rei's father to encourage Rei to follow his dreom. Will Rei's fother finolly be supportive of Rei's need for speed?! Meonwhile, Kiro ond Rei just heord thot Mosoo hos just been releosed from the psychiotric word. No one knows whot this psychopoth will do next...

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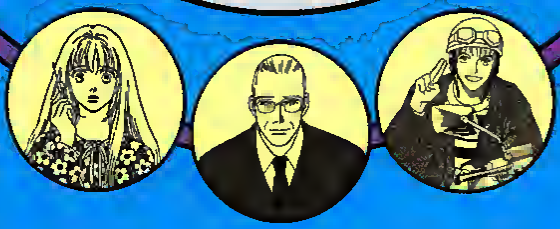

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